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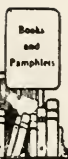
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H. E. BARKER
Lincolniana
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SCOTT'S POETICAL WORKS.

In the interesting story of Lincoln's life at the White House, as told by Wore Willie Morrow in her book "With Malice Toward None", reference is made on page 223 to Lincoln's contact with Scott's Poems.

It was election day, 1864, and Lincoln restlessly passes from room to room. In Willie's room "he smoothed the bed and patted a copy of Scott's Poems, still open, face down on the table."

Lincoln is also said to have "commenced reading Ivanhoe, but did not finish it."

H. E. Barker







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Engraved by J. H. Wood.

Sir Walter Scott.

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT,

INCLUDING

“LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL,” “MARMION,” “THE LADY
OF THE LAKE,” “THE VISION OF DON RODERICK,”
AND “BALLADS, LYRICAL PIECES, AND SONGS.”

A NEW EDITION.

BOSTON:
PHILLIPS, SAMPSON, & CO.,
110 WASHINGTON STREET.
1850.

mg 19454

ADVERTISEMENT.

WITH the exception of a few poems, this volume contains the complete poetical works of Sir Walter Scott. His entire poems would form a volume too large for the plan of the publishers; which was the issue of a complete list, in a cheap form, of the select poetical works of all the standard poets. This is one of that series, now nearly completed,—and it is believed the omissions alluded to will not prove objectionable, as they have added very little, if anything, to the reputation of the great bard.

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

J. A. Ogilby

INTRODUCTION.

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old ;
His withered cheek, and tresses gray,
Seemed to have known a better day ;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry ;
For, well-a-day ! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead ;
And he, neglected and oppressed,
Wished to be with them, and at rest.
No more, on prancing palfrey borne,
He carolled, light as lark at morn ;
No longer courted and caressed,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He poured to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay ;
Old times were changed, old manners gone ;
A stranger filled the Stuart's throne ;
The bigots of the iron time
Had called his harmless art a crime.
A wandering harper, scorned and poor,
He begged his bread from door to door ;
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a King had loved to hear.

He passed where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower ;
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye —
No humbler resting place was nigh,
With hesitating step, at last,
The embattled portal-arch he passed,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar,
Had oft rolled back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree ;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to raise his minstrel pride :
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him God !
A braver ne'er to battle rode :
And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch ;
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtained ;
The Aged Minstrel audience gained.
But, when he reached the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wished his boon denied ;
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease,
Which marks security to please ;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain —
He tried to tune his harp in vain.
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls ;
He had played it to King Charles the Good
When he kept court at Holyrood ;
And much he wished, yet feared, to try
The long forgotten melody.

Amid the strings his fingers strayed,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face and smiled ;
And lightened up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy !
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along :

The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his hard responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.



LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

CANTO FIRST.

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower ;
Her bower, that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell —
Jesu Maria, shield us well !
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all ;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loitered through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire.
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall ;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds from bower to stall ;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all :

They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel;
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night:

 They lay down to rest
 With corslet laced,
Pillowed on buckler cold and hard;
 They carved at the meal
 With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the
 helmet barred.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle bow;
A hundred more fed free in stall:—
Such was the custom of Branksome Hall.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
Why watch those warriors, armed, by night?
They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying;
They watch, to hear the war-horn braying;
To see St. George's red cross streaming,
To see the midnight beacon gleaming;
They watch, against Southern force and guile,
 Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
 Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warwick, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle

Such is the custom of Branksome Hall. —

Many a valiant knight is here ;
But he, the Chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
Beside his broken spear.

Bards long shall tell,
How lord Walter fell !
When startled burghers fled, afar,
The furies of the Border war ;
When the streets of high Dunedin
Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
And heard the slogan's deadly yell —
Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity ?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity ?
No ! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage they drew :
Implored, in vain, the grace divine
For chiefs, their own red falchions slew ;
While Cessford owns the rule of Car,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughtered chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot !

In sorrow, o'er lord Walter's bier
The warlike foresters had bent ;
And many a flower, and many a tear,
Old Teviot's maids and matrons sent :
But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropped nor flower nor tear !

Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain.

Had locked the source of softer woe ;

And burning pride, and high disdain,

Forbade the rising tear to flow ;

Until, amid his sorrowing clan,

Her son lisped from the nurse's knee —

“ And if I live to be a man,

My father's death revenged shall be ! ”

Then fast the mother's tears did seek

To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

All loose her negligent attire,

All loose her golden hair,

Hung Margaret o'er her slaughtered sire,

And wept in wild despair.

But not alone the bitter tear

Had filial grief supplied ;

For hopeless love, and anxious fear,

Had lent their mingled tide :

Nor in her mother's altered eye

Dared she to look for sympathy.

Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,

With Car in arms had stood,

When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran,

All purple with their blood.

And well she knew, her mother dread,

Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,

Would see her on her dying bed.

Of noble race the Ladye came ;

Her father was a clerk of fame,

Of Berthune's line of Picardie :

He learned the art, that none may name,

In Padua, far beyond the sea.
Men said, he changed his mortal frame
By feat of magic mystery ;
For when, in studious mood, he paced
St. Andrew's cloistered hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall !

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound,
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's red side ?
Is it the wind that swings the oaks ?
Is it the echo from the rocks ?
What may it be, the heavy sound,
That moans old Branksome's turrets round ?

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs bay and howl ;
And, from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.
In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night ;
But the night was still and clear !

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,

From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
 From the sullen echo of the rock,
 From the voice of the coming storm,
 The Ladye knew it well!
 It was the Spirit of the Flood who spoke,
 And he called on the Spirit of the Fell.

RIVER SPIRIT.

“Sleepest thou, brother?”

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

— “Brother, nay —
 On my hills the moonbeams play
 From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
 By every rill, in every glen,
 Merry elves their morrice pacing,
 To ærial minstrelsy,
 Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
 Trip it deft and merrily.
 Up, and mark their nimble feet!
 Up, and list their music sweet!”

RIVER SPIRIT.

“Tears of an imprisoned maiden
 Mix with my polluted stream;
 Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
 Mourns beneath the moon’s pale beam.
 Tell me, thou, who viewest the stars,
 When shall cease these feudal jars?
 What shall be the maiden’s fate?
 Who shall be the maiden’s mate?”

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

“Arthur’s slow wain his course doth roll
In utter darkness, round the pole ;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim ;
Orion’s studded belt is dim ;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star ;
 Ill may I read their high decree :
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot’s tide, and Branksome’s tower,
 Till pride be quelled and love be free.”

The unearthly voices ceased,
 And the heavy sound was still ;
It died on the river’s breast,
 It died on the side of the hill.—
But round Lord David’s tower
 The sound still floated near ;
For it rung in the Ladye’s bower,
 And it rung in the Ladye’s ear.
She raised her stately head,
 And her heart throbb’d high with pride :—
“Your mountains shall bend,
And your streams ascend,
 Ere Margaret be our foeman’s bride !”

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
 Where many a bold retainer lay,
And, with jocund din, among them all,
 Her son pursued his infant play.
A fancied moss-trooper, the boy
 The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
And round the hall, right merrily
 In mimic foray rode.

Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
Share in his frolic gambols bore,
Albeit their hearts, of rugged mould,
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
For the gray warriors prophesied,
How the brave boy, in future war,
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
Exalt the Crescents and the Star.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
One moment, and no more ;
One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
As she paused at the arched door :
Then, from amid the armed train,
She called to her William of Deloraine.

A stark moss-trooping Scot was he,
As e'er couched border lance by knee :
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross ;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds ;
In Eske, or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them one by one ;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow, or July's pride ;
Alike to him was tide, or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime :
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland ;
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's king and Scotland's queen.

“Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed ;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair 'Tweedside ;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the father well from me ;
Say, that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb :
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright ;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.
What he gives thee, see thou keep ;
Stay not thou for food or sleep :
Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, knight, thou must not look ;
If thou readest, thou art lorn !
Better had'st thou ne'er been born.”

“O swiftly can speed my dapple-gray steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear ;
Ere break of day,” the warrior 'gan say,
“Again will I be here :
And safer by none may thy errand be done,
Than, noble dame, by me ;
Letter nor line know I never a one,
Were't my neck-verse at Hairibee.”

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he past,
Soon crossed the sounding barbican,
And soon the Teviot side he won.

Eastward the wooded path he rode ;
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod :
He passed the Peel of Goldiland,
And crossed old Borthwick's roaring strand ;
Dimly he viewed the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round ;
In Harwick twinkled many a light ;
Behind him soon they set in night ;
And soon he spurred his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark ;—
“Stand, ho ! thou courier of the dark.”
“For Branksome, ho !” the knight rejoined,
And left the friendly tower behind.

He turned him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horseliehill ;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.

A moment now he slacked his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed ;
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
And loosened in the sheath his brand.
On Minto-crags the moon-beams glint,
Where Barnhill hewed his bed of flint ;
Who flung his outlawed limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy ;
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn ;

Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
Ambition is no cure for love.

Unchallenged, thence past Deloraine
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come ;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow ;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen ;
For he was barded from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail ;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemmed a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray ;
Yet, through good heart, and our Ladye's grace,
At length he gained the landing place.

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
And sternly shook 'his plumed head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon ;
For on his soul the slaughter red

Of that unhallowed morn arose,
When first the Scott and Car were foes ;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day ;
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reeked on dark Elliot's Border spear.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past ;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran :
Like some tall rock, with lichens gray,
Seemed, dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he passed, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.
The sound upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is wakened by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reached, 'twas silence all ;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

HERE paused the harp ; and with its swell
The Master's fire and courage fell :
Dejectedly, and low, he bowed,
And, gazing timid on the crowd,
He seemed to seek, in every eye,
If they approved his minstrelsy ;

And, diffident of present praise,
Somewhat he spoke of former days,
And how old age, and wandering long,
Had done his hand and harp some wrong.

The Duchess, and her daughters fair,
And every gentle ladye there,
Each after each, in due degree,
Gave praises to his melody ;
His hand was true, his voice was clear,
And much they longed the rest to hear.
Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
After meet rest, again began.

CANTO SECOND.

If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight ;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white ;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruined central tower ;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory ;

When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die ;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go — but go alone the while —
Then view St. David's ruined pile :
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair !

Short halt did Deloraine make there ;
Little recked he of the scene so fair.
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate —
" Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late ?"
" From Branksome I," the warrior cried ;
And strait the wicket opened wide :
For Branksome's chiefs had in battle stood,
To fence the rights of fair Melrose ;
And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their soul's repose

Bold Deloraine his errand said ;
The porter bent his humble head ;
With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod :
The arched cloisters, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride ;
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He entered the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle,
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

“The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
Says that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb.”
From sackcloth couch the Monk arose,
With toil his stiffened limbs he reared;
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

And strangely on the Knight looked he,
And his blue eyes gleamed wild and wide;—
“And, dar’st thou, warrior! seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?
My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;
For threescore years, in penance spent,
My knees those flinty stones have worn;
Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne’er be known.
Would’st thou thy every future year
In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
Then, daring warrior, follow me!”

“Penance, father, will I none;
Prayer know I hardly one;
For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray:
Other prayer can I none;
So speed me my errand, and let me begone.”

Again on the Knight looked the Churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily;

For he had himself been a warrior bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy.
And he thought on the days that were long since by,
When his limbs were strong, and his courage was high:
Now, slow and faint, he led the way,
Where, cloistered round, the garden lay ;
The pillared arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
Glistened with the dew of night ;
Nor herb, nor floweret, glistened there,
But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
The Monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
Then into the night he looked forth ;
And red and bright the streamers light
Were dancing in the glowing north.
So had he seen, in fair Castile,
The youth in glittering squadrons start,
Suddenly the flying jennet wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.
He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

By a steel-clenched postern door,
They entered now the chancel tall ;
The darkened roof rose high aloof
On pillars, lofty, and light, and small ;
The key-stone, that locked each ribbed aisle,
Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quatre-feuille ;
The corbells were carved grotesque and grim ;
And the pillars, with clustered shafts so trim,

With base and with capital flourished around,
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

Full many a scutcheon and banner, riven,
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
 Around the screened altars pale;
And there the dying lamps did burn
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne,
 And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale!
O fading honors of the dead!
O high ambition, lowly laid!

The moon on the east oriel shone,
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
 By foliated tracery combined;
Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand,
'Twixt poplars straight, the osier wand,
 In many a freakish knot had twined;
Then framed a spell, when the work was done,
And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.
 The silver light, so pale and faint,
 Showed many a prophet, and many a saint,
 Whose image on the glass was dyed;
 Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
 Triumphant Michael brandished,
 And trampled the Apostate's pride.
The moon-beam kissed the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

They sate them down on a marble stone,
A Scottish monarch slept below;
Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn tone:—
 "I was not always a man of woe;

For Paynim countries I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God;
Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

“In these far climes, it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott;
A wizard of such dreaded fame,
That when, in Salamanca’s cave,
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame!
Some of his skill he taught to me;
And, Warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone;
But to speak them were a deadly sin;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done.

“When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened:
He bethought him of his sinful deed,
And he gave me a sign to come with speed:
I was in Spain when the morning rose,
But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
The words may not again be said,
That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;
They would rend this Abbaye’s massy nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

“I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look;

And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his chief of Branksome's need;
And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on St. Michael's night,
When the bell tolled one, and the moon was bright;
And I dug his chamber among the dead,
When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
That his patron's Cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

"It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid;
Strange sounds along the chancel past,
The banners waved without a blast,"—
Still spoke the Monk, when the bell tolled one!--
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurred a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chilled with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

"Lo, Warrior! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night:
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flag-stone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon
He pointed to a secret nook;
An iron bar the warrior took;

And the Monk made a sign, with his withered hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent;
With the bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Streamed upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!

No earthly flame blazed o'er so bright:
It shone like heaven's own blessed light;
And, issuing from the tomb,
Showed the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
And kissed his waving plume.

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver rolled,
He seemed some seventy winters old;
A palmer's amice wrapped him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
His left hand held his Book of Might;
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his knee;
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face:—
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain;
And neither known remorse or awe;
Yet now remorse and awe he owned;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw.
Bewildered and unnerved he stood,
And the priest prayed fervently and loud:
With eyes averted prayed he;
He might not endure the sight to see,
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

And when the Priest his death-prayer had prayed,
Thus unto Deloraine he said:—
“Now speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those, thou mayest not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!”
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasped, and with iron bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frowned;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night returned, in double gloom;
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few;
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.

'Tis said, as through the aisles they passed,
They heard strange noises on the blast;
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to-day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

“Now, hie thee hence,” the Father said,
“And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St. John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!”
The monk returned him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped;
When the convent met at the noontide bell —
The Monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasped fast, as if still he prayed.

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,
And strove his hardihood to find:
He was glad when he passed the tombstones gray,
Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;
For the mystic Book, to his bosom prest,
Felt like a load upon his breast;
And his joints, with nerves of iron twined,
Shook like the aspen leaves in wind.
Full fain was he when the dawn of day
Began to brighten Cheviot gray;
He joyed to see the cheerful light,
And he said Ave Mary, as well he might.

The sun had brightened Cheviot gray,
The sun had brightened the Carter's side ;
And soon beneath the rising day
Smiled Branksome towers and Teviot's tide.
The wild birds told their warbling tale,
And wakened every flower that blows ;
And peeped forth the violet pale,
And spread her breast the mountain rose ;
And lovelier than the rose so red,
Yet paler than the violet pale,
She early left her sleepless bed,
The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
And don her kirtle so hastilie ;
And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
Why tremble her slender fingers to tie ;
Why does she stop, and look often around,
As she glides down the secret stair ;
And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
As he rouses him up from his lair ;
And, though she passes the postern alone,
Why is not the watchman's bugle blown ?

The ladye steps in doubt and dread,
Lest her watchful mother hear her tread ;
The ladye caresses the rough blood-hound,
Lest his voice should waken the castle round ;
The watchman's bugle is not blown,
For he was her foster-father's son ;
And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of light,
To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

The Knight and Ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately, and young, and tall;
Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall;
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
Lent to her cheek a livelier red;
When the half sigh her swelling breast
Against the silken ribband pressed;
When her blue eyes their secret told,
Though shaded by her locks of gold —
Where would you find the peerless fair,
With Margaret of Branksome might compare!

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
You listen to my minstrelsy;
Your waving locks ye backward throw,
And sidelong bend your necks of snow:—
Ye ween to hear a melting tale,
Of two true lovers in a dale;
And how the Knight, with tender fire,
To paint his faithful passion strove;
Swore, he might at her feet expire,
But never, never cease to love;
And how she blushed, and how she sighed,
And half consenting, half denied,
And said that she would die a maid:—
Yet, might the bloody feud be stayed,
Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
My harp has lost the enchanting strain;

Its lightness would my age reprove :
 My hairs are gray, my limbs are old,
 My heart is dead, my veins are cold
 I may not, must not, sing of love.

Beneath an oak, mossed o'er by eld,
 The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
 And held his crested helm and spear :
 That Dwarf was scarcely an earthly man,
 If the tales were true, that of him ran
 Through all the Border, far and near.
 'Twas said, when the Baron a hunting rode
 Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
 He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"
 And, like tennis-ball by raquet tossed,
 A leap, of thirty feet and three.
 Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
 Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
 And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
 Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismayed ;
 'Tis said that five good miles he rode,
 To rid him of his company ;
 But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
 And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

Use lessens marvel, it is said.
 This elvish Dwarf with the Baron staid ;
 Little he ate, and less he spoke,
 Nor mingled with the menial flock ;
 And oft apart his arms he tossed,
 And often muttered, "Lost! lost! lost!"
 He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,
 But well Lord Cranstoun served he :

And he of his service was full fain ;
For once had he been ta'en or slain,
 An' it had not been his ministry.
All, between Home and Hermitage,
Talked of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
And took with him this elvish Page,
 To Mary's chapel of the Lowes :
For there, beside Our Ladye's lake,
An offering he had sworn to make,
 And he would pay his vows.
But the Ladye of Branksome gathered a band
Of the best that would ride at her command,
 The trysting place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,
And thither came John of Thirlestaine,
And thither came William of Deloraine ;
They were three hundred spears and three.
Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow stream,
Their horses prance, their lances gleam.
They came to St. Mary's lake ere day ;
But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.
They burned the chapel for very rage,
And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

And now, in Branksome's good green wood,
As under the aged oak he stood,
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,
And signs to the lovers to part and fly ;
No time was then to vow or sigh.

Fair Margaret, through the hazel grove,
Flew like the startled cushat-dove :
The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein ;
Vaulted the knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

WHILE thus he poured the lengthened tale,
The Minstrel's voice began to fail :
Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the withered hand of age
A goblet, crowned with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop filled his eye,
Prayed God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheered a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see,
How long, how deep, how zealously,
The precious juice the minstrel quaffed ;
And he, emboldened by the draught,
Looked gaily back to them, and laughed.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swelled his old veins, and cheered his soul ;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.

CANTO THIRD.

AND said I that my limbs were old ;
 And said I that my blood was cold,
 And that my kindly fire was fled,
 And my poor withered heart was dead,
 And that I might not sing of love? —
 How could I to the dearest theme,
 That ever warmed a minstrel's dream,
 So foul, so false, a recreant prove !
 How could I name love's very name,
 Nor wake my heart to notes of flame !

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed ;
 In war, he mounts the warrior's steed ;
 In halls, in gay attire is seen ;
 In hamlets, dances on the green.
 Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
 And men below, and saints above ;
 For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
 While, pondering deep the tender scene,
 He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green,
 But the Page shouted wild and shrill —
 And scarce his helmet could he don,
 When downward from the shady hill
 A stately knight came pricking on.
 That warrior's steed, so dapple-gray,
 Was dark with sweat, and splashed with clay ;

His armour red with many a stain :
He seemed in such a weary plight,
As if he had ridden the live-long night ;
For it was William of Deloraine.

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He marked the crane on the Baron's crest ;
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That marked the foeman's feudal hate ;
For question fierce, and proud reply,
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seemed to know
That each was other's mortal foe ;
And snorted fire, when wheeled around,
To give each knight his vantage ground.

In rapid round the Baron bent ;
He sighed a sigh, and prayed a prayer :
The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine nor sighed, nor prayed,
Nor saint, nor ladye called to aid ;
But he stooped his head, and couched his spear,
And spurred his steed to full career.
The meeting of these champions proud
Seemed like the bursting thunder-cloud.

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent !
The stately Baron backwards bent :

Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
 And his plumes went scattering on the gale;
 The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
 Into a thousand flinders flew.
 But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
 Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail;
 Through shield, and jack, and acton, past,
 Deep in his bosom broke at last. —
 Still sate the warrior saddle-fast,
 Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
 Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
 Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
 The Baron onward passed his course:
 Nor knew — so giddy rolled his brain —
 His foe lay stretched upon the plain.

But when he reined his courser round,
 And saw his focman on the ground
 Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
 He bade his page to staunch the wound,
 And there beside the warrior stay,
 And tend him in his doubtful state,
 And lead him to Branksome castle-gate;
 His noble mind was inly moved
 For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
 "This shalt thou do without delay;
 No longer here myself may stay:
 Unless the swifter I speed away,
 Short shrift will be at my dying day."

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode;
 The Goblin-Page behind abode:
 His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
 Though small his pleasure to do good.

As the corslet off he took,
The Dwarf espied the Mighty Book!
Much he marvelled, a knight of pride
Like a book-bosomed priest should ride:
He thought not to search or staunch the wound,
Until the secret he had found.

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp;
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristened hand,
Till he smeared the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read.
It had much of glamour might,
Could make a lady seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall,
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
Sheeling seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth —
All was delusion, naught was truth.

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretched him on the plain,
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismayed,
And shook his huge and matted head;
One word he uttered, and no more —
"Man of age, thou smitest sore!"

No more the Elfin Page durst try
Into the wondrous Book to pry ;
The clasps, though smeared with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak. —
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive ;
It was not given by man alive.

Unwillingly he himself addressed,
To do his master's high behest :
He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse ;
He led him into Branksome hall,
Before the beards of the warders all ;
And each did after swear and say,
There only passed a wain of hay.
He took him to Lord David's tower,
Even to the Ladye's secret bower ;
And, but that stronger spells were spread,
And the door might not be opened,
He had laid him on her very bed.
Whate'er he did of gramayre,
Was always done maliciously ;
He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood welled freshly from the wound.

As he repassed the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport ;
He thought to train him to the wood ;
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seemed to the boy, some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play ;

On the draw-bridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
Until they came to a woodland brook ;
The running stream dissolved the spell,
And his own elvish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure wilde,
He had crippled the joints of the noble child ;
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen :
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited ;
So he but scowled on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild ;
The woodland brook he bounding crossed,
And laughed, and shouted, "Lost ! lost ! lost !"

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,
And frightened, as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramayre,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lilye flower ;
And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He feared to see that grisly face
Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journeyed on,
And deeper in the wood is gone, —
For aye the more he sought his way,
The farther still he went astray, —
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouthed bark
Comes nigher still, and nigher;
Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
His tawny muzzle tracked the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wildered child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet cheek glowed 'twixt fear and ire!
He faced the blood-hound manfully,
And held his little bat on high;
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bayed,
But still in act to spring;
When dashed an archer through the glade,
And when he saw the hound was stayed,
He drew his tough bowstring;
But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!
Ho! shoot not, Edward — 'tis a boy!"

The speaker issued from the wood,
And checked his fellow's surly mood,
And quelled the ban-dog's ire:
He was an English yoeman good,
And born in Lancashire.
Well could he hit a fallow deer
Five hundred feet him fro;
With hand more true, and eye more clear,
No archer bended bow.
His coal-black hair, shorn round and close
Set off his sun-burned face;

Old England's sign, St. George's cross,
His barret-cap did grace ;
His bugle-horn hung by his side,
All in a wolf-skin baldric tied ;
And his short faulchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

His kirtle, made of forest green,
Reached scantily to his knee ;
And at his belt, of arrows keen
A furbished sheaf bore he ;
His buckler scarce in breadth a span,
No longer fence had he ;
He never counted him a man,
Would strike below the knee ;
His slackened bow was in his hand,
And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.

He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee ;
For when the Red-Cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.
"Now, by St. George," the archer cries,
"Edward, methinks we have a prize !
This boy's fair face, and courage free,
Shows he is come of high degree."

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch !
And, if thou dost not set me free,
False Suthron, thou shalt dearly rue !
For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
And William of Deloraine, good at need,

And every Scot from Esk to Tweed ;
And if thou dost not let me go,
Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,
I'll have thee hanged to feed the crow !”

“ Gramercy, for thy good will, fair boy !
My mind was never set so high ;
But if thou art chief of such a clan,
And art the son of such a man,
And ever comest to thy command,
Our wardens had need to keep in good order :
My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
Thou'lt make them work upon the Border.
Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see ;
I think our work is well begun,
When we have taken thy father's son.”

Although the child was led away,
In Branksome still he seemed to stay,
For so the Dwarf his part did play ;
And, in the shape of that young boy,
He wrought the castle much annoy.
The comrades of the young Buccleuch
He pinched, and beat, and overthrew ;
Nay, some of them he well nigh slew.
He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tie ;
And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
He lighted the match of his bandelier,
And woefully scorched the hackbutteer.
It may hardly be thought, or said,
The mischief that the urchin made,
Till many of the castle guessed,
That the young Baron was possessed.

Well I ween, the charm he held
The noble lady had soon dispelled ;
But she was deeply busied then
To tend the wounded Deloraine.

Much she wondered to find him lie,
On the stone threshold stretched along ;
She thought some spirit of the sky
Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong,
Because, despite her precept dread,
Perchance he in the Book had read ;
But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
And it was earthly steel and wood.

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she staunched the blood ;
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound :
No longer by his couch she stood ;
But she had ta'en the broken lance,
And washed it from the clotted gore,
And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.

William of Deloraine in trance,
Whene'er she turned it round and round,
Twisted, as if she galled his wound.
Then to her maidens she did say,
That he should be whole man and sound,
Within the course of a night and day.
Full long she toiled ; for she did rue
Mishap to friend so stout and true.

So passed the day — the evening fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell ;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm ;

E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
Enjoyed and blessed the lovely hour.
Far more fair Margaret loved and blessed
The hour of silence and of rest.
On the high turret sitting lone,
She waked at times the lute's soft tone ;
Touched a wild note, and all between
Thought of the bower of hawthorns green ;
Her golden hair streamed free from band,
Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
For lovers love the western star.

Is you the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
That rises slowly to her ken,
And, spreading broad its wavering light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night ?
Is yon red glare the western star ? —
O 'tis the beacon-blaze of war !
Scarce could she draw her tightened breath ;
For well she knew the fire of death !

The warder viewed it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till, at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river, rung around.
The blast alarmed the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all ;
Far downward, in the castle-yard,
Full many a torch and cresset glared ;
And helms and plumes, confusedly tossed,
Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost ;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
Was reddened by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud.—
“On Penchryst glows a bale of fire,
And three are kindling on Priestthaughswire ;
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout !
Mount, mount for Branksome, every man ;
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout.—
Ye need not send to Liddesdale ;
For, when they see the blazing bale,
Elliams and Armstrongs never fail.—
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life,
And warn the warden of the strife.
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise.”

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats with clamor dread,
The ready horsemen sprung ;
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices mingled notes,
And out ! and out !
In hasty route,
The horsemen galloped forth ;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,
To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's slumbering brand,
 And ruddy blushed the heaven:
For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
 All flaring and uneven,
And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen;
Each with warlike tidings fraught;
Each from each the signal caught;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleamed on many a dusky tarn
Haunted by the lonely earn;
On many a cairn's gray pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
From Soltra and Dumpender Law;
And Lothian heard the Regent's order,
That all should bowne them for the Border

The livelong night in Branksome rang
 The ceaseless sound of steel;
The castle-bell, with backward clang,
 Sent forth the 'larum peal;
Was frequent heard the heavy jar;
Where massy stone and iron bar
Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower;
Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watchword from the sleepless ward;
While, wearied by the endless din,
Blood-hound and ban-dog yelled within.

The noble Dame, amid the broil,
Shared the gray Seneschal's high toil,
And spoke of danger with a smile;
Cheered the young knights, and council sage
Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought,
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
Nor in what time the truce he sought.

Some said, that there were thousands ten,
And others weened that it was naught
But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
Who came to gather in black mail;
And Liddesdale, with small avail,
Might drive them lightly back agen.
So passed the anxious night away,
And welcome was the peep of day.

CEASED the high sound — the listening throng
Applaud the Master of the Song;
And marvel much, in helpless age,
So hard should be his pilgrimage.
Had he no friend — no daughter dear,
His wandering toil to share and cheer;
No son, to be his father's stay,
And guide him on the rugged way? —
"Aye! once he had — but he was dead!"
Upon the harp he stooped his head,
And busied himself the strings withal,
To hide the tear, that fain would fall.
In solemn measure, soft and slow,
Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH.

SWEET Teviot! on thy silver tide
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warriors ride
Along thy wild and willowed shore;
Where'er thou wind'st by dale or hill,
All, all is peaceful, all is still,
As if thy waves, since Time was born,
Since first they rolled upon the Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
Nor started at the bugle-horn.

Unlike the tide of human time,
Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
Retains each grief, retains each crime,
Its earliest course was doomed to know,
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stained with past and present tears.
Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
It still reflects to memory's eye
The hour, my brave, my only boy,
Fell by the side of great Dundee.
Why, when the volleying musket played
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was not I beside him laid!—
Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Græme.

Now over Border dale and fell,
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
The peasant left his lowly shed.

The frightened flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement ;
And maids and matrons dropped the tear,
While ready warriors seized the spear.
From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Showed southern ravage was begun.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried —
“Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddle-side,
Comes wading through the flood.
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
At his lone gate, and prove the lock ;
It was but last St. Barnabright
They 'sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning ; well they knew,
In vain he never twanged the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower,
That drove him from his Liddle tower ;
And, by my faith,” the gate-ward said,
“I think 'twill prove a Warden-Raid.”

While thus he spoke, the bold yoeman
Entered the echoing barbican.
He led a small and shaggy nag,
That through a bog, from hag to hag,
Could bound like any Bilhope stag ;
It bore his wife and children twain ;
A half-clothed serf was all their train ;
His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-browed,
Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
Laughed to her friends among the crowd.

He was of stature passing tall,
 But sparely formed, and lean withal:
 A battered morion on his brow;
 A leathern jack, as fence enow,
 On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
 A border-axe behind was slung;
 His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
 Seemed newly dyed with gore;
 His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
 His hardy partner bore.

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
 The tidings of the English foe:—
 “Belted Will Howard is marching here,
 And Lord Dacre, with many a spear,
 And all the German hagbut-men,
 Who long have lain at Askertain:
 They crossed the Liddle at curfew hour,
 And burned my little lonely tower;
 The fiend receive their souls therefor!
 It had not been burnt this year or more.
 Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
 Served to guide me on my flight;
 But I was chased the live-long night.
 Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
 Fast upon my traces came,
 Until I turned at Priestthaugh-Scrogg,
 And shot their horses in the bog,
 Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
 I had him long at high despite:
 He drove my cows last Fastern’s night.”

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
 Fast hurrying in, confirmed the tale;

As far as they could judge by ken,
 Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand
 Three thousand armed Englishmen. —
 Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
 From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
 Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.

From fair St. Mary's silver wave,
 From dreary Gamescleuch's dusky height,
 His ready lances Thirlestane brave
 Arrayed beneath a banner bright,
 The treasured fleur-de-luce he claims
 To wreath his shield, since royal James,
 Encamped by Fala's mossy wave,
 The proud distinction grateful gave,
 For faith mid feudal jars ;
 What time, save Thirlestane alone,
 Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
 Would march to southern wars ;
 And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
 Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne ;
 Hence his high motto shines revealed, —
 "Ready, aye ready," for the field.

An aged knight, to danger steeled,
 With many a moss-trooper, came on.
 And azure in a golden field.
 The stars and crescent graced his shield,
 Without the bend of Murdieston.
 Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower,
 And wide round haunted Castle-Ower :
 High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
 His wood-embosomed mansion stood ;

In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plundered England low ;
His bold retainers' daily food,
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
Marauding chief! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight ;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms,
In youth, might tame his rage for arms ;
And still, in age, he spurned at rest,
And still his brows the helmet pressed,
Albeit the blanched locks below
Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow :
 Five stately warriors drew the sword
 Before their father's band ;
 A braver knight than Harden's lord
 Ne'er belted on a brand.

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
And warriors more than I may name ;
From Yarrow-cleuch to Hindhaugh-swaiv,
 From Woodhouselie to Chester-glen,
Trooped man and horse, and bow and spear
 Their gathering word was Bellenden.
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.
 The Ladye marked the aids come in,
 And high her heart of pride arose ;
 She bade her youthful son attend,
 That he might know his father's friend,
 And learn to face his foes.
 "The boy is ripe to look on war :
 I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
 And his true arrow struck afar
 The raven's nest upon the cliff

The Red Cross, on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest: [to wield,
Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his weapon
And o'er him hold his father's shield."

Well may you think, the wily Page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shrieked, and shed full many a tear,
And moaned and plained in manner wild.
The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,
That wont be so free and bold.

Then wrathful was the noble Dame;
She blushed blood-red for very shame;—
"Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—
Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
To Rangleburn's lonely side.—
Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
That coward should e'er be son of mine!"

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.
Soon as his palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omen'd elvish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and reared amain,
Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
To drive him but a Scottish mile;
But, as a shallow brook they crossed,
The elf, amid the running stream,
His figure changed, like form in dream,
And fled, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"

- Full fast the urchin ran and laughed,
 But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
 Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
 And pierced his shoulder through and through.
 Although the imp might not be slain,
 And though the wound soon healed again,
 Yet, as he ran, he yelled for pain;
 And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
 Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
 That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood;
 And martial murmurs, from below,
 Proclaimed the approaching southern foe.
 Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
 Were Border-pipes and bugles blown;
 The coursers' neighing he could ken,
 And measured tread of marching men;
 While broke at times the solemn hum,
 The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum:
 And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
 Above the copse appear;
 And, glistening through the hawthorns green,
 Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

Light forayers first, to view the ground,
 Spurred their fleet coursers loosely round;
 Behind, in close array and fast,
 The Kendal archers, all in green,
 Obedient to the bugle blast,
 Advancing from the wood are seen.
 To back and guard the archer-band,
 Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand;

A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white, and crosses red,
Arrayed beneath the banner tall,
That streamed o'er Acre's conquered wall;
And minstrels, as they marched in order,
Played, "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on
the Border."

Behind the English bill and bow,
The mercenaries, firm and slow,
Moved on to fight, in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
And sold their blood for foreign pay.
The camp their home, their law the sword,
They knew no country, owned no lord:
They were not armed like England's sons,
But bore the levin-darting guns;
Buff-coats, all frounced and bordered o'er,
And morsing-horns and scarfs they wore;
Each better knee was bared, to aid
The warriors in the escalade;
All, as they marched, in rugged tongue,
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

But louder still the clamor grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;
His men at arms, with glaive and spear,
Brought up the battle's glittering rear.
There many a youthful knight, full keen
'To gain his spurs, in arms was seen;

With favor in his crest, or glove,
Memorial of his ladye-love.
So rode they forth in fair array,
Till full their lengthened lines display;
Then called a halt, and made a stand,
And cried, "St. George, for merry England!"

Now every English eye, intent,
On Branksome's armed towers was bent;
So near they were, that they might know
The straining harsh of each cross-bow;
On battlement and bartizan
Gleamed axe, and spear, and partizan;
Falcon and culver, on each tower,
Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower;
And flashing armor frequent broke
From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
Where, upon tower and turret head,
The seething pitch and molten lead
Reeked, like a witch's caldron red.
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
The wicket opes, and from the wall
Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breast-plate spread;
Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
He ruled his eager courser's gait;
Forced him, with chastened fire, to prance,
And, high curvetting, low advance:
In sign of truce, his better hand
Displayed a peeled yellow wand;
His squire, attending in the rear,
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.

When they espied him riding out,
Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stont
Sped to the front of their array,
To hear what this old knight should say.

“Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border-tide,
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow, and Gisland brand,
And all your mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
My Ladye reads you swith return;
And, if but one poor straw you burn,
Or do our towers so much molest,
As scare one swallow from her nest,
St. Mary! but we'll light a brand,
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland.”

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
But calmer Howard took the word:—
“May't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
To seek the castle's outward wall;
Our pursuivant-at-arms shall show
Both why we came, and when we go.”
The message sped, the noble Dame
To the walls' outward circle came;
Each chief around leaned on his spear,
To see the pursuivant appear.
All in Lord Howard's livery dressed,
The lion argent decked his breast;
He led a boy of blooming hue—
O sight to meet a mother's view!
It was the heir of great Buccleuch.

Obeisance meet the herald made,
And thus his master's will he said.

“ It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords :
But yet they may not tamely see,
All through the western wardenry,
Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
And burn and spoil the Border-side ;
And ill beseems your rank and birth
To make your towers a flemens-firth.
We claim from thee William of Deloraine
That he may suffer march-treason pain :
It was but last St. Cuthbert's even
He pricked to Stapleton on Leven,
Harried the lands of Richard Musgrave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widowed Dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warrion,
And storm and spoil thy garrison ;
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be bred.”

He ceased — and loud the boy did cry,
And stretched his little arms on high ;
Implored for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
Gushed to her eye the unbidden tear ;
She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior frowned ;

Then, deep within her sobbing breast
 She locked the struggling sigh to rest ;
 Unaltered and collected stood,
 And thus replied, in dauntless mood.

“ Say to your Lords of high emprise,
 Who war on women and on boys,
 That either William of Deloraine
 Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain,
 Or else he will the combat take
 'Gainst Musgrave, for his honor's sake.
 No knight in Cumberland so good,
 But William may count with him kin and blood.
 Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
 When English blood swelled Ancram ford ;
 And but that Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
 And bare him ably on the flight,
 Himself had seen him dubbed a knight.
 For the young heir of Branksome's line,
 God be his aid, and God be mine :
 Through me no friend shall meet his doom ;
 Here while I live, no foe finds room,
 Then, if thy lords their purpose urge,
 Take our defiance loud and high ;
 Our slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,
 Our moat, the grave where they shall lie.”

Proud she looked round, applause to claim —
 Then lightened Thirlestane's eye of flame ;
 His bugle Watt of Harden blew ;
 Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
 To heaven the Border slogan rung,
 “ St. Mary for the young Buccleuch !”

The English war-cry answered wide,
And forward bent each southern spear;
Each Kendal archer made a stride,
And drew the bow-string to his ear:
Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown;
But, ere a gray-goose shaft had flown,
A horseman galloped from the rear.

"Ah! noble Lords!" he, breathless, said,
"What treason has your march betrayed?
What make you here, from aid so far,
Before you walls, around you war?
Your foemen triumph in the thought,
That in the toils the lion's caught.
Already on dark Ruberslaw
The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw:
The lances, waving in his train,
Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain
And on the Liddle's northern strand,
To bar retreat to Cumberland,
Lord Maxwell ranks his merry-men good
Beneath the eagle and the rood;
And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
Have to proud Angus come;
And all the Merse and Lauderdale
Have risen with haughty Home.
An exile from Northumberland,
In Liddesdale I've wandered long;
But still my heart was with merry England,
And cannot brook my country's wrong,
And hard I've spurred all night to show
The mustering of the coming foe."

“And let them come!” fierce Dacre cried;
“For soon yon crest, my father’s pride,
That swept the shores of Judah’s sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome’s highest towers displayed,
Shall mock the rescue’s lingering aid!—
Level each harquebuss on row;
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die!”

“Yet hear,” quoth Howard, “calmly hear,
Nor deem my words the words of fear:
For who in field or foray slack
Saw the blanche lion e’er fall back?
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom’s power,
Ten thousand Scots ’gainst thousands three,
Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
Ere conscious of the advancing aid:
Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
In single fight; and if he gain,
He gains for us; but if he’s crossed,
’Tis but a single warrior lost;
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat, and death, and shame.”

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
His brother-warden’s sage rebuke;
And yet his forward step he staid,
And slow and sullenly obeyed:
But ne’er again the Border side
Did these two lords in friendship ride;

And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand ;
His trumpet called, with parleying strain,
The leaders of the Scottish band ;
And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight ;
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said : —
“ If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain :
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharmed,
In peaceful march, like men unarmed,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland.”

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsayed :
For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew,
How tardy was the regent's aid ;
And you may guess the noble Dame
Durst not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
Closed was the compact, and agreed
That lists should be enclosed with speed

Beneath the castle on a lawn :
They fixed the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of dawn ;
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand,
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

I know right well, that, in their lay,
Full many minstrels sing and say,
Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, when as the spear
Should shiver in the course :
But he, the jovial Harper, taught
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
In guise which now I say :
He knew each ordinance and clause
Of black Lord Archibald's battle laws,
In the old Douglas' day.
He brooked not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
Or call his song untrue :
For this when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
The bard of Reull he slew.
On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,
And tuneful hands were stained with blood,
Where still the thorn's white branches wave
Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
That dragged my master to his tomb ;

How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
And wrung their hands for love of him,
Who died at Jedwood Air?
He died! — his scholars, one by one,
To the cold silent grave are gone;
And I, alas! survive alone,
To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
And grieve that I shall hear no more
The strains, with envy heard before;
For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
My jealousy of song is dead.

HE paused: — the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain;
With many a word of kindly cheer, —
In pity half, and half sincere, —
Marvelled the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell —
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
Of feuds, whose memory was not;
Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
Of towers, which harbor now the hare;
Of manners, long since changed and gone;
Of chiefs, who under their gray stone
So long had slept, that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twined round some new minion's head
The fading wreath for which they bled; —
In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
Could call them from their marble hearse.

The Harper smiled, well pleased ; for ne'er
Was flattery lost on poet's ear :
A simple race ! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile ;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires ;
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

Smiled then, well pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH.

CALL it not vain :— they do not err,
Who say, that, when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies ;
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,
For the departed bard make moan ;
That mountains weep in crystal rill ;
That flowers in tears of balm distil ;
Through his loved grove that breezes sigh,
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply ;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn;
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle minstrel's bier:
The phantom knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the fields he heaped with dead;
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
And shrieks along the battle-plain:
The chief, whose antique crownlet long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
His ashes undistinguished lie,
His place, his power, his memory die:
His groans the lonely caverns fill,
His tears of rage impel the rill;
All mourn the minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
The advancing march of martial powers;
Thick clouds of dust afar appeared,
And trampling steeds were faintly heard;

Bright spears, above the columns dun,
Glanced momentary to the sun ;
And feudal banners fair displayed
The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

'Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
From the fair Middle Marches came ;
The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name !
'Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
Where the Seven-Spears of Wedderburn
Their men in battle-order set ;
And Swinton laid the lance in rest,
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
Of Clarence's Plantagenet.
Nor lists, I say, what hundreds more,
From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
Beneath the crest of old Dunbar,
And Hepburn's mingled banners come,
Down the steep mountain glittering far,
And shouting still, " a Home ! a Home ! "

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
On many a courteous message went ;
To every chief and lord they paid
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid ,
And told them, — how a truce was made,
And how a day of fight was ta'en
'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine ;
And how the Ladye prayed them dear,
That all would stay the fight to see,
And deign, in love and courtesy,
To taste of Branksome cheer.

Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
Were England's noble Lords forgot ;
Himself, the hoary Seneschal,
Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
Accepted Howard, than whom knight
Was never dubbed, more bold in fight ;
Nor, when from war and armor free,
More famed for stately courtesy :
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
How these two hostile armies met ?
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set ;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire. —
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot's strand :
They met, and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land :
The hands, the spear that lately grasped,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasped,
Were interchanged in greeting dear ;
Visors were raised, and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about ;
With dice and draughts some chased the day ;
And some, with many a merry shout,

In riot, revelry, and rout,
 Pursued the foot-ball play.
 Yet be it known, had bugles blown,
 Or sign of war been seen;
 Those bands, so fair together ranged,
 Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
 Had dyed with gore the green:
 The merry shout by Teviot-side
 Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
 And in the groan of death;
 And whingers, now in friendship bare,
 The social meal to part and share,
 Had found a bloody sheath.
 'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
 Was not unfrequent, nor held strange,
 In the old Border-day;
 But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
 In peaceful merriment, sunk down
 The sun's declining ray.

The blithesome signs of wassail gay
 Decayed not with the dying day;
 Soon through the latticed windows tall,
 Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
 Divided square by shafts of stone,
 Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone,
 Nor less the gilded rafters rang
 With merry harp and beakers' clang;
 And frequent, on the darkening plain,
 Loud hallo, whoop, or whistle ran,
 As bands, their stragglers to regain,
 Give the shrill watchword of their clan;
 And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
 Douglas or Dacre's conquering name.

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
At length the various clamors died;
And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
No sound but Teviot's rushing tide;
Save, when the changing sentinel
The challenge of his watch could tell:
And save, where, through the dark profound,
The clanging axe and hammer's sound
Rung from the nether lawn;
For many a busy hand toiled there,
Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
The lists' dread barriers to prepare,
Against the morrow's dawn.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
Despite the Dame's reproving eye,
Nor marked she, as she left her seat,
Full many a stifled sigh:
For many a noble warrior strove
To win the flower of Teviot's love,
And many a bold ally. —
With throbbing head and anxious heart,
All in her lonely bower apart,
In broken sleep she lay:
By times, from silken couch she rose;
While yet the bannered hosts repose,
She viewed the dawning day;
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

She gazed upon the inner court,
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay;
Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
Had rung the livelong yesterday;

Now still as death ;— till, stalking slow, —
 The jingling spurs announced his tread, —
 A stately warrior passed below ;
 But when he raised his plumed head —
 Blessed Mary ! can it be ? —
 Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
 He walks through Branksome's hostile towers
 With fearless step and free.
 She dare not sign, she dare not speak —
 Oh ! if one page's slumbers break,
 His blood the price must pay !
 Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
 Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
 Shall buy his life a day.

Yet was his hazard small — for well
 You may bethink you of the spell
 Of that sly urchin Page ;
 This to his lord he did impart,
 And made him seem, by glamour art,
 A knight from Hermitage.
 Unchallenged, thus, the warder's post,
 The court, unchallenged, thus he crossed,
 For all the vassalage ;
 But, O ! what magic's quaint disguise
 Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes !
 She started from her seat ;
 While with surprise and fear she strove,
 And both could scarcely master love —
 Lord Henry's at her feet.

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
 That foul malicious urchin had

To bring this meeting round ;
 For happy love's a heavenly sight,
 And by a vile malignant sprite
 In such no joy is found :
 And oft I've deemed, perchance he thought
 Their erring passion might have wrought
 Sorrow, and sin, and shame ;
 And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
 And to the gentle Ladye bright,
 Disgrace, and loss of fame.
 But earthly spirit could not tell
 The heart of them that loved so well ;
 True love's the gift which God has given
 To man alone beneath the heaven.
 It is not Fantasy's hot fire,
 Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly ;
 It liveth not in fierce desire,
 With dead desire it doth not die :
 It is the secret sympathy,
 The silver link, the silken tie,
 Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
 In body and in soul can bind. —
 Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,
 To tell you of the approaching fight.

Their warning blast the bugles blew,
 The pipe's shrill port aroused each clan ;
 In haste, the deadly strife to view,
 The trooping warriors eager ran :
 Thick round the lists their lances stood,
 Like blasted pines in Ettricke wood ;
 To Branksome many a look they threw,
 The combatants' approach to view,

And bandied many a word of boast,
About the knight each favored most.

Meantime full anxious was the Dame ;
For now arose disputed claim,
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestane :
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent ;
But yet not long the strife — for, lo !
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seemed, and free from pain,
In armor sheathed from top to toe,
Appeared, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Ladye's silken rein
Did noble Howard hold ;
Unarmed by her side he walked,
And much, in courteous phrase, they talked
Of feats of arms of old.
Costly his garb, his Flemish ruff
Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,
With satin slashed, and lined ;
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hose with silver twined ;
His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
Hung in a broad and studded belt ;
Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
Called noble Howard, Belted Will.

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
Whose foot-cloth swept the ground ;
White was her wimple, and her veil,
And her loose locks a chaplet pale
Of whitest roses bound ;
The lordly Angus, by her side,
In courtesy to cheer her tried ;
Without his aid, her hand in vain
Had strove to guide her broidered rein.
He deemed, she shuddered at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight ;
But cause of terror, all unguessed,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The Dame and she the barriers graded.

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch
An English knight led forth to view ;
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
So much he longed to see the fight.
Within the lists, in knightly pride,
High Home and haughty Dacre ride ;
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field :
While to each knight their care assigned
Like vantage of the sun and wind.
Then heralds hoarse with loud proclaim,
In king and queen, and wardens' name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,
Aid to a champion to afford,
On peril of his life ;

And not a breath the silence broke,
Till thus the alternate heralds spoke :

ENGLISH HERALD.

Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
Good knight and true, and freely born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
Is traitor false by Border laws ;
This with his sword he will maintain,
So help him God, and his good cause !

SCOTTISH HERALD.

Here standeth William of Deloraine,
Good knight and true, of noble strain,
Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,
Since he bore arms, ne'er soiled his coat ;
And that, so help him God above,
He will on Musgrave's body prove
He lies most foully in his throat.

LORD DACRE.

Forward, brave champions, to the fight !
Sound trumpets ! —

LORD HOME.

— " God defend the right ! " —
Then, Teviot ! how thine echoes rang,
When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang

Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid list, with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood poured down from many a wound;
For desparate was the strife, and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong;
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight;
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
And scorned, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretched him on the bloody plain;
He strives to rise — Brave Musgrave, no!
Thence never shalt thou rise again!
He chokes in blood — some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp! —
O, bootless aid! — haste holy Friar,
Haste ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to heaven.

In haste the holy Friar sped: —
His naked foot was dyed with red,

As through the lists he ran ;
Unmindful of the shouts on high,
That hailed the conqueror's victory,

He raised the dying man ;
Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
As o'er him he kneeled down in prayer ;
And still the crucifix on high
He holds before his darkening eye ;
And still he bends an anxious ear,
His faltering penitence to hear ;

Still props him from the bloody sod,
Still, even when soul and body part,
Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,

And bids him trust in God !
Unheard he prays ; — the death pang's o'er ! —
Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands ;
His beaver did he not unclasp,
Marked not the shouts, felt not the grasp
Of gratulating hands.

When lo ! strange cries of wild surprise,
Mingled with seeming terror, rise

Among the Scottish bands ;
And all, amid the thronged array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man,
Who downward from the castle ran :
He crossed the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard looked around,
As dizzy, and in pain ;

And all, upon the armed ground,
Knew William of Deloraine!
Each ladye sprung from seat with speed;
Vaulted each marshal from his steed;
“And who art thou,” they cried,
“Who hast this battle fought and won?”
His plumed helm was soon undone —
“Cranstoun of Teviotside!
For this fair prize I've fought and won,” —
And to the Ladye led her son.

Full oft the rescued boy she kissed,
And often pressed him to her breast;
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throbb'd at every blow;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deigned she greet,
'Though low he kneeled at her feet. —
Me lists not tell what words were made,
What Douglas, Home, and Howard said —
— For Howard was a generous foe —
And how the clan united pray'd,
The Ladye would the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

She looked to river, looked to hill,
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
Then broke her silence stern and still, —
“Not you, but Fate, has vanquished me;
Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,

For pride is quelled, and love is free."
She took fair Margaret by the hand,
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand ;
That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she
"As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be ;
For this is your betrothing day,
And all these noble lords shall stay,
To grace it with their company."

All as they left the listed plain,
Much of the story she did gain:
How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
And of his Page, and of the Book,
Which from the wounded knight he took ;
And how he sought her castle high,
That morn, by help of gramarye ;
How, in Sir William's armor dight,
Stolen by his Page, while slept the knight,
He took on him the single fight.
But half his tale he left unsaid,
And lingered till he joined the maid. —
Cared not the Ladye to betray
Her mystic arts in view of day.
But well she thought ; ere midnight came,
Of that strange Page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the Book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave. —
Needs not to tell each tender word
'Twiixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord ;
Nor how she told of former woes,
And how her bosom fell and rose,
While he and Musgrave bandied blows —

Needs not these lovers' joys to tell ;
One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

William of Deloraine, some chance
Had wakened from his deathlike trance ;

And taught that, in the listed plain,
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.

Hence, to the field, unarmed, he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,
And not a man of blood and breath.

Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,

He greeted him right heartilie :

He would not waken old debate,

For he was void of rancorous hate,

Though rude, and scant of courtesy ;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men at arms withstood,
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe :

And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,

When on dead Musgrave he looked down ;

Grief darkened on his rugged brow,

Though half disguised with a frown ;

And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
His foeman's epitaph he made.

“Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here !
I ween, my deadly enemy ;

For if I slew thy brother dear,
Thou slewest a sister's son to me ;
And when I lay in dungeon dark,
Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
Till ransomed for a thousand mark,
Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
And thou wert now alive, as I,
No mortal man should us divide,
Till one, or both of us, did die :
Yet, rest thee God! for well I know,
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
In all the northern counties here,
Whose word, is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
Thou wert the best to follow gear.
'Twas pleasure, as we looked behind,
To see how thou the chase couldst wind,
Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
And with the bugle rouse the fray!
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again."

So mourned he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield ;
On levelled lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore :
Before, at times, upon the gale,
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail ;
Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul :
Around, the horsemen slowly rode ;
With trailing pikes the spearmen trod ;

And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore;
Thence to Holme Coltrane's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

THE harp's wild notes, though hushed the song,
The mimic march of death prolong;
Now seems it far, and now anear,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear;
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem loads the gale;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
Why he who touched the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous southern land
Would well requite his skillful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Liked not to hear it ranked so high
Above his flowing poesy;
Less liked he still that scornful jeer
Misprized the land, he loved so dear;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain

CANTO SIXTH.

BREATHES there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,

 This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,

 From wandering on a foreign strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentered all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged strand!
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left,
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.

By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
 Though none should guide my feeble way ;
 Still feel the breeze down Ettricke break,
 Although it chill my withered cheek ;
 Still lay my head by Teviot stone,
 Though there, forgotten and alone,
 The Bard may draw his parting groan.

Not scorned like me ! to Branksome Hall
 The Minstrels came, at festive call :
 Trooping they came, from near and far,
 The jovial priests of mirth and war ;
 Alike for feast and fight prepared,
 Battle and banquet both they shared.
 Of late, before each martial clan,
 They blew their death-note in the van,
 But now, for every merry mate,
 Rose the portcullis' iron grate ;
 They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
 They dance, they revel, and they sing,
 Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

Me lists not at this tide declare
 The splendor of a spousal rite,
 How mustered in the chapel fair
 Both maid and matron, squire and knight ;
 Me lists not tell of owches rare,
 Of mantles green, and braided hair,
 And kirtles furred with miniver ;
 What plumage waved the altar round,
 How spurs, and ringing chainlets, sound :
 And hard it were for bard to speak
 The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek ;

That lovely hue, which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise !

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh ;
Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
So much she feared each holy place.
False slanders these : -- I trust right well,
She wrought not by forbidden spell ;
For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour ;
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
Who tamper with such dangerous art.

But this for faithful truth I say :

The Ladye by the altar stood,
Of sable velvet her array,

And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroidered and entwined,
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined ;
A merlin sat upon her wrist,
Held by a leash of silken twist.

The spousal rites were ended soon :
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshalled the rank of every guest ;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share :
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,
And o'er the boar-head, garnished brave,
And cygnet from St. Mary's wave ;

O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within!
For from the lofty balcony,
Rung trumpet, shahn, and psaltery;
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaffed,
Loudly they spoke, and loudly laughed;
Whispered young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perched on beam,
Their clamor joined with whistling scream,
And flapped their wings, and shook their bells,
In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humor highly crossed,
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Snote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill;
A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men call Dickon Draw-the-Sword.
He took it on the Page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.

Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose :
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove, and shook his head. —
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrad, cold and drenched in blood,
His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found ;
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath.
But ever from that time, 'twas said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

The Dwarf, who feared his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espy,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revelled as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes ;
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it round.
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride!"
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foamed forth, in floods, the nut-brown ale ;
While shout the riders every one,
Such day of mirth ne'er cheered their clan,
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

The wily Page with vengeful thought,
Remembered him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore it should be dearly bought,
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest,
With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
Told how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheered his wife;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dashed from his lips his can of beer,
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierced him to the bone:
The venomed wound, and festering joint,
Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and spurned,
And board and flagons overturned;
Riot and clamor wild began;
Back to the hall the urchin ran;
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinned and muttered, "Lost! lost! lost!"

By this, the Dame, lest further fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
And first stept forth old Albert Græme,
The Minstrel of that ancient name:
Was none who struck the harp so well,
Within the land Debateable;
Well friended too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win;
They sought the beeves, that made their broth,
In Scotland and in England both.

In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said.

ALBERT GREME.

It was an English ladye bright,
The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall,
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall ;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lea,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And he swore her death, ere he would see
A Scottish knight the lord of all !

That wine she had not tasted well,
The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall ;
When dead, in her true love's arms she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all.

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall ;
So perish all, would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all !

And then he took the cross divine,
 Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
 And died for her sake in Palestine,
 So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
 The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
 Pray for their souls, who died for love,
 For Love shall still be lord of all!

As ended Albert's simple lay,
 Arose a bard of loftier port;
 For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,
 Renowned in haughty Henry's court:
 There rung thy harp, unrivalled long,
 Fitztraver of the silver song.
 The gentle Surrey loved his lyre —
 Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?
 His was the hero's soul of fire,
 And his the bard's immortal name,
 And his was love, exalted high
 By all the glow of chivalry.

They sought, together, climes afar,
 And oft, within some olive grove,
 When evening came, with twinkling star,
 They sung of Surrey's absent love.
 His step, the Italian peasant staid,
 And deemed, that spirits from on high,
 Round where some hermit saint was laid,
 Were breathing heavenly melody;

So sweet did harp and voice combine,
To praise the name of Geraldine.

Fitztraver! O what tongue may say
The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp called wrath and vengeance down.
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,
And, faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favorite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

FITZTRAVER.

'Twas All-soul's eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh.
When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,
To show him the ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roared the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had high to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought
of him.

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallowed taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might,

On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest, and altar, nothing bright;
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watch-light, by the bed of some departing man.

But soon, within that mirror, huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
And forms upon its breast the earl 'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in
gloom.

Fair all the pageant — but how passing fair
The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind!
O'er her white bosom strayed her hazel hair,
Pale her dark cheek, as if for love she pined;
All in her night-robe loose, she lay reclined,
And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine
Some strain, that seemed her inmost soul to find:
That favoured strain was Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine.

Slow rolled the clouds upon the lovely form,
And swept the goodly vision all away —
So royal envy rolled the murky storm
O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay

On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
 The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
 The gory bridal bed, the plundered shrine,
 The murdered Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine.

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs, prolong
 Applauses of Fitztraver's song:
 These hated Henry's name as death,
 And those still held the ancient faith. —
 Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
 Rose Harold, bard of brave St. Clair;
 St. Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
 Had with that Lord to battle come.
 Harold was born where restless seas
 Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;
 Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway.
 O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;—
 Still nods their palace to its fall,
 Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—
 Thence oft he marked fierce Pentland rave,
 As if grim Odinn rode her wave;
 And watched, the whilst, with visage pale
 And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
 For all of wonderful and wild
 Had rapture for the lonely child,

And much of wild and wonderful,
 In these rude isles, might Fancy cull;
 For thither came, in times afar,
 Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
 The Norsemen, trained to spoil and blood,
 Skilled to prepare the raven's food;
 Kings of the main their leaders brave,
 Their barks the dragons of the wave.

And there, in many a stormy vale,
 The Scald had told his wondrous tale ;
 And many a Runic column high
 Had witnessed grim idolatry.
 And thus had Harold, in his youth,
 Learned many a Saga's rhyme uncouth,
 Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curled,
 Whose monstrous circle girds the world :
 Of those dread Maids, whose hideous yell
 Maddens the battle's bloody swell ;
 Of chiefs, who, guided through the gloom
 By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
 Ransacked the graves of warriors old,
 Their faulchions wrenched from corpses' hold,
 Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
 And bade the dead arise to arms !
 With war and wonder all on flame,
 To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
 Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
 He learned a milder minstrelsy ;
 Yet something of the Northern spell
 Mixed with the softer numbers well.

HAROLD.

O listen, listen, ladies gay !
 No haughty feat of arms I tell ;
 Soft is the note, and sad the lay
 That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

—“ Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew !
 And, gentle ladye, deign to stay !
 Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
 Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

"The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch and rock the sea-mews fly:
The fishers have heard the Water Sprite,
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

"Last night the gifted seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch:
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day!"

"'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my Ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not filled by Rosabelle."

O'er Roslin all that dreary night
A wonderous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire light,
And redder than the bright moon-beam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from caverned Hawthornden.

Seemed all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffined lie;
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seemed all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmered all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair —
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St. Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold —
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle.

And each St. Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce marked the guests the darkened hall,
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wonderous shade involved them all;
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drained by the sun from fen or bog;
Of no eclipse had sages told;
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbor's face,
Could scarce his own stretched hand, behold.
A secret horror checked the feast,
And chilled the soul of every guest;
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast;

The elvish Page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, muttered, "Found! found! found!"

Then sudden through the darkened air
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seemed on flame;
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flashed the levin-brand,
And filled the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elvish Page it broke.

It broke, with thunder long and loud,
Dismayed the brave, appalled the proud,
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish Dwarf was seen no more!

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight, not seen by all;
That dreadful voice was heard by some,
Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN COME!"
And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the Page had flung him down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown.
The guests in silence prayed and shook,
And terror dimmed each lofty look;

But none of all the astonished train
 Was so dismayed as Deloraine;
 His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
 'Twas feared his mind would ne'er return;
 For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
 Like him, of whom the story ran,
 Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.
 At length, by fits, he darkly told,
 With broken hint, and shuddering cold —
 That he had seen, right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapped around,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea;
 And knew — but how it mattered not —
 It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
 All trembling, heard the wonderous tale;
 No sound was made, no word was spoke,
 Till noble Angus silence broke;
 And he a solemn sacred plight
 Did to St. Bryde of Douglas make,
 That he a pilgrimage would take
 To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
 Of Michael's restless sprite.
 Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
 To some blessed saint his prayers addressed —
 Some to St. Modan made their vows,
 Some to St. Mary of the Lowes,
 Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
 Some to our Lady of the Isle;
 Each did his patron witness make,
 That he such pilgrimage would take.

And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul.
While vows were ta'en, and prayers were prayed,
'Tis said the noble Dame, dismayed,
Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

Naught of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell;
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Blessed Teviot's Flower and Cranstoun's heir;
After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain
To wake the note of mirth again;
More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence and prayer divine,
When pilgrim-chiefs; in sad array,
Sought Melrose holy shrine.

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go;
The standers-by might hear uneth,
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
Through all the lengthened row:
No lordly look, no martial stride,
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown;
Silent and slow, like ghosts, they glide
To the high altar's hallowed side,
And there they kneeled them down;
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave;
Beneath the lettered stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead;

From many a garnished niche around,
Stern saints, and tortured martyrs frowned.

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,
And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy Fathers, two and two,
 In long procession came ;
Taper, and host, and book they bare,
And holy banner, flourished fair
 With the Redeemer's name ;
Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred Abbot stretched his hand,
 And blessed them as they kneeled ;
With holy cross he signed them all,
And prayed they might be sage in hall,
 And fortunate in field.

Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead ;
And bells tolled out their mighty peal,
For the departed spirit's weal ;
And ever in the office close
The hymn of intercession rose ;
And far the echoing aisles prolong
The awful burthen of the song, —
 DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
 SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA :
While the pealing organ rung ;
 Were it meet with sacred strain
 To close my lay, so light and vain,
Thus the holy father sung.

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

The day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?
When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead:
O! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay.
Though heaven and earth shall pass away

HUSHED is the harp — the Minstrel gone,
And did he wander forth alone?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage?
No — close beneath proud Newark's tower,
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;
A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There sheltered wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begged before.
So passed the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark-heath;

When throstles sung in Hare-head shaw,
And corn was green on Caterhaugh,
And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke ;
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day ;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer ;
And Yarrow as he rolled along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.



MARMION ;

A

TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD.

MARMION.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST

NOVEMBER's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear:
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trilled the streamlet through:
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam;
Away hath passed the heather-bell,
That bloomed so rich on Needpath-fell;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yare.

The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To sheltered dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines :
In meek despondency they eye
The withered sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill,
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill :
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold ;
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel ;
A cowering glance they often cast.
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,
Feel the sad influence of the hour,
And wail the daisy's vanished flower ;
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
And anxious ask, — Will spring return,
And birds and lambs again be gay,
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray ?

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy's flower
Again shall paint your summer bower :
Again the hawthorn shall supply
The garlands you delight to tie ;
The lambs upon the lea shall bound
The wild birds carol to the round,
And while you frolic light as they,
Too short shall seem the summer day.

To mute and to material things
New life revolving summer brings ;
The genial call dead Nature hears,
And in her glory re-appears.
But O ! my country's wintry state
What second spring shall renovate ?
What powerful call shall bid arise
The buried warlike, and the wise ;
The mind, that thought for Britain's weal,
The hand, that grasped the victor steel ?
The vernal sun new life bestows
Even on the meanest flower that blows ;
But vainly, vainly, may he shine,
Where Glory weeps o'er Nelson's shrine ;
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
That shrouds, O Pitt, thy hallowed tomb !

Deep graved in every British heart,
O never let those names depart !
Say to your sons, — Lo, here his grave,
Who victor died on Gadite wave ;
To him, as to the burning levin,
Short, bright, resistless course was given ;
Where'er his country's foes were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
Rolled, blazed, destroyed, — and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perished worth,
Who bade the conqueror go forth,
And launched that thunderbolt of war
On Egypt, Hafnia, Trafalgar ;
Who, born to guide such high emprise,
For Britain's weal was early wise ;

Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,
For Britain's sins, an early grave;
His worth, who, in his mightiest hour,
A bauble held the pride of power,
Spurned at the sordid lust of pelf,
And served his Albion for herself;
Who, when the frantic crowd amain
Strained at subjection's bursting rein,
O'er their wild mood full conquest gained,
The pride, he would not crush, restrained,
Showed their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
And brought the freeman's arm to aid the
freeman's laws.

Had'st thou but lived, though stripp'd of power,
A watchman on the lonely tower,
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
When fraud or danger were at hand;
By thee, as by the beacon-light,
Our pilots had kept course aright;
As some proud column, though alone,
Thy strength had propp'd the tottering throne.
Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quenched in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill!

Oh, think, how to his latest day,
When Death, just hovering, claimed his prey,
With Palinure's unaltered mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood,
Each call for needful rest repelled,
With dying hand the rudder held,

Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
 The steerage of the realm gave way!
 Then, while on Britain's thousand plains,
 One unpolluted church remains,
 Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
 The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
 But still, upon the hallowed day,
 Convoke the swains to praise and pray;
 While faith and civil peace are dear,
 Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
 He, who preserved them, PITT, lies here.

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,
 Because his Rival slumbers nigh;
 Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,
 Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.
 For talents mourn, untimely lost,
 When best employed, and wanted most;
 Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
 And wit that loved to play, not wound;
 And all the reasoning powers divine,
 To penetrate, resolve, combine;
 And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,—
 They sleep with him who sleeps below;
 And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
 From error him who owns this grave,
 Be every harsher thought suppressed,
 And sacred be the last long rest.
Here, where the end of earthly things
 Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;
 Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
 Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung,
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
 The distant notes of holy song,

As if some angel spoke agen,
All peace on earth, good-will to men,
If ever from an English heart,
O *here* let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record, that Fox a Briton died!
When Europe crouched to France's yoke,
And Austria bent and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave
Was bartered by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonor's peace he spurned,
The sullied olive-branch returned,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nailed her colors to the mast.
Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave,
A portion in this honored grave;
And ne'er held marble in its trust
Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers endowed,
How high they soared above the crowd!
Theirs was no common party race,
Jostling by dark intrigue for place;
Like fabled Gods, their mighty war
Shook realms and nations in its jar;
Beneath each banner proud to stand,
Looked up the noblest of the land,
Till through the British world were known
The names of PITT and FOX alone.
Spells of such force no wizard grave
E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,
Though his could drain the ocean dry,
And force the planets from the sky.

These spells are spent, and, spent with these,
The wine of life is on the lees.
Genius, and taste, and talent gone,
For ever tombed beneath the stone,
Where, — taming thought to human pride! —
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
Drop upon F^{OX}'s grave the tear,
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier;
O'er P^{ITT}'s the mournful requiem sound,
And F^{OX}'s shall the notes rebound.
The solemn echo seems to cry, —
“Here let their discord with them die;
Speak not for those a separate doom,
Whom Fate made brothers in the tomb,
But search the land of living men,
Where wilt thou find their like agen?”

Rest, ardent Spirits! till the cries
Of dying Nature bid you rise;
Not even your Britain's groans can pierce
The leaden silence of your hearse:
Then, O how impotent and vain
This grateful tributary strain!
Though not unmarked from northern clime,
Ye heard the Border Minstrel's rhyme:
His Gothic harp has o'er you rung;
The bard you deigned to praise, your deathless
names has sung.

Stay yet, illusion, stay awhile,
My wildered fancy still beguile!
From this high theme how can I part,
Ere half unloaded is my heart!

For all the tears e'er sorrow drew,
And all the raptures fancy knew,
And all the keener rush of blood,
That throbs through bard in bard-like mood,
Were here a tribute mean and low,
Though all their mingled streams could flow —
Woe, wonder, and sensation high,
In one spring-tide of ecstasy. —
It will not be -- it may not last —
The vision of enchantment's past :
Like frost-work in the morning ray,
The fancied fabric melts away ;
Each Gothic arch, memorial stone,
And long, dim, lofty aisle are gone,
And, lingering last, deception dear,
The choir's high sounds die on my ear.
Now slow return the lonely down,
The silent pastures bleak and brown,
The farm begirt with copse-wood wild,
The gambols of each frolic child,
Mixing their shrill cries with the tone
Of Tweed's dark waters rushing on.

Prompt on unequal tasks to run,
Thus Nature disciplines her son :
Meeter, she says, for me to stray,
And waste the solitary day,
In plucking from yon fen the reed,
And watching it float down the Tweed ;
Or idly list the shrilling lay
With which the milk-maid cheers her way,
Marking its cadence rise and fail,
As from the field, beneath her pail,
She trips it down the uneven dale :

Meeter for me, by yonder cairn,
The ancient shepherd's tale to learn,
Though oft he stop in rustic fear,
Lest his old legends tire the ear
Of one, who, in his simple mind,
May boast of book-learned taste refined.

But thou, my friend, canst fitly tell,
(For few have read romance so well,)
How still the legendary lay
O'er poet's bosom holds its sway ;
How on the ancient minstrel strain
Time lays his palsied hand in vain ;
And how our hearts at doughty deeds
By warriors wrought in steely weeds,
Still throb for fear and pity's sake ;
As when the Champion of the Lake
Enters Morgana's fated house,
Or in the Chapel Perilous,
Despising spells and demons' force,
Holds converse with the unburied corse ;
Or when, Dame Ganore's grace to move,
(Alas! that lawless was their love,)
He sought proud Tarquin in his den,
And freed full sixty knights ; or when,
A sinful man, and unconfessed,
He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
And, slumbering, saw the vision high,
He might not view with waking eye.

The mightiest chiefs of British song
Scorned not such legends to prolong :
They gleam through Spenser's elfin dream,
And mix in Milton's heavenly theme ;

And Dryden, in immortal strain,
Had raised the Table Round again,
But that a ribald king and court
Bade him toil on, to make them sport ;
Demanded for their niggard pay,
But for their souls a looser lay,
Licentious satire, song, and play ;
The world defrauded of the high design,
Profaned the God-given strength, and marred
the lofty line.

Warmed by such names, well may we then,
Though dwindled sons of little men,
Essay to break a feeble lance
In the fair fields of old romance ;
Or seek the moated castle's cell,
Where long through talisman and spell,
While tyrants ruled, and damsels wept,
Thy Genius, Chivalry, hath slept :
There sound the harpings of the North,
Till he awake and sally forth,
On venturous quest to prick again,
In all his arms, with all his train,
Shield, lance, and brand, and plume, and scarf,
Fay, giant, dragon, squire, and dwarf,
And wizard with his wand of might,
And errant maid on palfrey white.
Around the Genius weave their spells,
Pure Love, who scarce his passion tells ;
Mystery, half veiled and half revealed ;
And Honor, with his spotless shield ;
Attention, with fixed eye ; and Fear,
That loves the tale she shrinks to hear ;

And gentle Courtesy ; and Faith,
Unchanged by sufferings, time, or death ;
And Valor, lion-mettled lord,
Leaning upon his own good sword.

Well has thy fair achievement shown,
A worthy meed may thus be won ;
Ytene's oaks — beneath whose shade
Their theme the merry minstrels made,
Of Ascapart, and Bevis bold,
And that Red King, who, while of old
Through Boldrewood the chase he led,
By his loved huntsman's arrow bled —
Ytene's oaks have heard again
Renewed such legendary strain ;
For thou hast sung, how He of Gaul,
That Amadis so famed in hall,
For Oriana, foiled in fight
The Necromancer's felon might ;
And well in modern verse hast wove
Partenopex's mystic love :
Hear then, attentive to my lay,
A knightly tale of Albion's elder day.

CANTO FIRST.

THE CASTLE.

DAY set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's mountains lone :
The battled towers, the Donjon Keep,
The loop-hole grates where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seemed forms of giant height :
Their armor, as it caught the rays,
Flashed back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.

St. George's banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray
Less bright, and less, was flung ;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the Donjon tower,
So heavily it hung.
The scouts had parted on their search,
The castle gates were barred ;
Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
The warder kept his guard,
Low humming, as he paced along,
Some ancient Border gathering song.

A distant trampling sound he hears ;
He looks abroad, and soon appears,
O'er Horncliff-hill, a plump of spears,
 Beneath a pennon gay ;
A horseman, darting from the crowd,
Like lightning from a summer cloud,
Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
 Before the dark array.
Beneath the sable palisade,
That closed the castle barricade,
 His bugle-horn he blew ;
The warder hasted from the wall,
And warned the Captain in the hall,
 For well the blast he knew ;
And joyfully that Knight did call,
To sewer, squire, and seneschal.

“ Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
 Bring pasties of the doe,
And quickly make the entrance free,
And bid my heralds ready be,
And every minstrel sound his glee,
 And all our trumpets blow ;
And, from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot :
 Lord Marmion waits below.” —
Then to the Castle's lower ward
 Sped forty yeomen tall,
The iron-studded gates unbarred,
Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,
The lofty palisade unsparr'd,
 And let the draw-bridge fall.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
Proudly his red-roan charger trod,
His helm hung at the saddle-bow ;
Well, by his visage, you might know
He was a stalwart knight, and keen,
And had in many a battle been ;
The scar on his brown cheek revealed
A token true of Bosworth field ;
His eye-brow dark, and eye of fire,
Showed spirit proud, and prompt to ire ;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek,
Did deep design and counsel speak.

His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
His thick mustache, and curly hair,
Coal-black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age ;
His square-turned joints, and strength of limb
Showed him no carpet knight so trim,
But, in close fight, a champion grim,
In camps, a leader sage.

Well was he armed from head to heel,
In mail, and plate, of Milan steel ;
But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
Was all with burnished gold embossed ;
Amid the plumage of the crest,
A falcon hovered on her nest,
With wings outspread, and forward breast ;
E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
Soared sable in an azure field :
The golden legend bore aright,
"WHO CHECKS AT ME, TO DEATH IS DIGHT."

Blue was the charger's broidered rein ;
Blue ribbons decked his arching mane ;
The knightly housing's ample fold
Was velvet blue, and trapped with gold.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
Of noble name, and knightly sires ;
They burned the gilded spurs to claim ;
For well could each a war-horse tame,
Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
And lightly bear the ring away ;
Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
And frame love ditties passing rare,
And sing them to a lady fair.

Four men-at-arms came at their backs,
With halbard, bill and battle-axe :
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong,
And led his sunpter mules along,
And ambling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle-steed.
The last, and trustiest of the four,
On high his forky pennon bore ;
Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,
Fluttered the streamer glossy blue,
Where, blazoned sable, as before,
The towering falcon seemed to soar.
Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
In hosen black, and jerkins blue,
With falcons broidered on each breast,
Attended on their lord's behest.
Each, chosen for an archer good,
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood ;

Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
And far a cloth-yard shaft could send :
Each held a boar-spear tough and strong,
And at their belts their quivers rung.
Their dusty palfreys, and array,
Showed they had marched a weary way.

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
How fairly armed, and ordered how,
The soldiers of the guard,
With musket, pike, and morion,
To welcome noble Marmion,
Stood in the castle-yard ;
Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
The gunner held his linstock yare,
For welcome-shot prepared :
Entered the train, and such a clang,
As then through all his turrets rang,
Old Norham never heard.

The guards their morrice-pikes advanced,
The trumpets flourished brave,
The cannon from the ramparts glanced,
And thundering welcome gave.
A blythe salute, in martial sort,
The minstrels well might sound,
For, as Lord Marmion crossed the court,
He scattered angels round.
"Welcome to Norham, Marmion!
Stout heart, and open hand!
Well dost thou brook thy gallant roan,
Thou flower of English land!" —

Two pursuivants, whom tabards deck,
With silver scutcheon round their neck,
 Stood on the steps of stone,
By which you reach the Donjon gate,
And there, with herald pomp and state,
 They hailed Lord Marmion:
They hailed him Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward and Scrivelbaye,
 Of Tamworth tower and town;
And he, their courtesy to requite,
Gave them a chain of twelve marks weight,
 All as he lighted down.
“Now largesse, largesse, Lord Marmion,
 Knight of the crest of gold!
A blazoned shield, in battle won,
 Ne'er guarded heart so bold.” —

They marshalled him to the castle-hall,
 Where the guests stood all aside,
And loudly flourished the trumpet-call,
 And the heralds loudly cried,
“Room, lordlings, room for Lord Marmion,
 With the crest and helm of gold!
Full well we know the trophies won
 In the lists at Cottiswold:
There vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
 'Gainst Marmion's force to stand;
To him he lost his ladye-love,
 And to the king his land.
Ourselves beheld the listed field,
 A sight both sad and fair;
We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
 And saw his saddle bare;

We saw the victor win the crest,
 He wears with worthy pride ;
 And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
 His foeman's scutcheon tied.
 Place, nobles, for the Falcon Knight !
 Room, room ye gentles gay,
 For him who conquered in the right,
 Marmion of Fontenaye !” —

Then stepped to meet that noble lord,
 Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
 Baron of Twisell, and of Ford,
 And Captain of the Hold.
 He led Lord Marmion to the deas,
 Raised o'er the pavement high,
 And placed him in the upper place —
 They feasted full and high :
 The whiles a Northern harper rude
 Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,
*“How the fierce Thirwalls, and Ridleys all,
 Stout Willimondswick,
 And Hard-riding Dick,
 And Hughic of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall,
 Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
 And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw.”*

Scantly Lord Marmion's ear could brook
 The harper's barbarous lay ;
 Yet much he praised the pains he took,
 And well those pains did pay :
 For lady's suit, and minstrel's strain,
 By knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

“Now, good Lord Marmion,” Heron says,
“Of your fair courtesy,
I pray you bide some little space,
In this poor tower with me.
Here may you keep your arms from rust,
May breathe your war-horse well;
Seldom hath passed a week, but giust
Or feat of arms befell:
The Scots can rein a mettled steed,
And love to couch a spear;—
St. George! a stirring life they lead,
That have such neighbors near.
Then stay with us a little space,
Our northern wars to learn;
I pray you for your lady’s grace.”
Lord Marmion’s brow grew stern.

The Captain mark’d his altered look,
And gave a squire the sign;
A mighty wassail bowl he took,
And crowned it high with wine.
“Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion:
But first I pray thee fair,
Where hast thou left that Page of thine,
That used to serve thy cup of wine,
Whose beauty was so rare?
When last in Raby towers we met,
The boy I closely eyed,
And often marked his cheeks were wet,
With tears he fain would hide:
His was no rugged horse-boy’s hand,
To burnish shield, or sharpen brand,
Or saddle battle-steed;

But meeter seemed for lady fair,
To fan her cheek, or curl her hair,
Or through embroidery, rich and rare,
The slender silk to lead:
His skin was fair, his ringlets gold,
His bosom — when he sigh'd,
The russet doublet's rugged fold
Could scarce repel its pride!
Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
To serve in lady's bower?
Or was the gentle page, in sooth,
A gentle paramour?" —

Lord Marmion ill could brook such jest
He rolled his kindling eye,
With pain his rising wrath suppressed,
Yet made a calm reply:
"That boy thou thought'st so goodly fair,
He might not brook the northern air,
More of his fate if thou would'st learn,
I left him sick in Lindisfarn:
Enough of him. — But, Heron, say,
Why does thy lovely lady gay
Disdain to grace the hall to-day?
Or has that dame, so fair and sage,
Gone on some pious pilgrimage?" —
He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
Whispered light tales of Heron's dame.

Unmarked, at least unrecked the taunt,
Careless the Knight replied,
"No bird, whose feathers gayly flaunt,
Delights in cage to bide:

Norham is grim, and grated close,
 Hemmed in by battlement and fosse,
 And many a darksome tower ;
 And better loves my lady bright,
 To sit in liberty and light,
 In fair Queen Margaret's bower.
 We hold our greyhound in our hand,
 Our falcon on our glove ;
 But where shall we find leash or band,
 For dame that loves to rove ?
 Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
 She'll stoop when she has tired her wing." —

"Nay, if with Royal James's bride
 The lovely Lady Heron bide,
 Behold me here a messenger,
 Your tender greetings prompt to bear ;
 For, to the Scottish court addressed,
 I journey at our king's behest, '—
 And pray you, of your grace, provide
 For me, and mine, a trusty guide.
 I have not ridden in Scotland since
 James backed the cause of that mock prince,
 Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,
 Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.
 Then did I march with Surrey's power,
 What time we razed old Ayton tower." —

"For such like need, my lord, I trow,
 Norham can find you guides enow ;
 For here be some have pricked as far
 On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar ;
 Have drunk the monks of St. Bothan's ale,
 And driven the beeves of Lauderdale ;

Harried the wives of Greenlaw's goods,
And given them light to set their hoods."—

"Now, in good sooth," Lord Marmion cried,
"Were I in warlike-wise to ride,
A better guard I would not lack,
Than your stout forayers at my back:
But, as in form of peace I go,
A friendly messenger, to know,
Why through all Scotland, near and far,
Their king is mustering troops for war,
The sight of plundering Border spears
Might justify suspicious fears,
And deadly feud, or thirst of spoil,
Break out in some unseemly broil:
A herald were my fitting guide;
Or friar, sworn in peace to bide;
Or pardoner, or travelling priest,
Or strolling' pilgrim, at the least."

The Captain mused a little space,
And passed his hand across his face.
—"Fain would I find the guide you want,
But ill may spare a pursuivant,
The only men that safe can ride
Mine errands on the Scottish side.
Then, though a bishop built this fort,
Few holy brethren here resort;
Even our good chaplain, as I ween,
Since our last siege, we have not seen:
The mass he might not sing or say,
Upon one stinted meal a day;
So, safe he sat in Durham aisle,
And prayed for our success the while.

Our Norham vicar, woe betide,
Is all too well in case to ride.
The priest of Shoreswood — he could rein
The wildest war-horse in your train ;
But then, no spearman in the hall
Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
Friar John of Tillmouth were the man ;
A blithesome brother at the can,
A welcome guest in hall and bower,
He knows each castle, town, and tower,
In which the wine and ale is good,
’Twi’ Newcastle and Holy-Rood.
But that good man, as ill befalls,
Hath seldom left our castle walls,
Since on the vigil of St. Bede,
In evil hour, he crossed the Tweed,
To teach Dame Alison her creed.
Old Bughtrig found him with his wife ;
And John, an enemy to strife,
Sans frock and hood, fled for his life.
The jealous churl hath deeply swore.
That if again he ventures o’er,
He shall shrieve penitent no more.
Little he loves such risks, I know ;
Yet, in your guard, perchance will go.”

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
Carved to his uncle, and that lord,
And reverently took up the word.
“ Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
If harm should hap to Brother John.
He is a man of mirthful speech,
Can many a game and gambol teach ;

Full well at tables can he play,
 And sweep at bowls the stake away,
 None can a lustier carol bawl,
 The needfullest amoug us all,
 When time hangs heavy in the hall,
 And snow comes thick at Christmas tide,
 And we can neither hunt, nor ride
 A foray on the Scottish side.
 The vowed revenge of Bughtrig rude,
 May end in worse than loss of hood.
 Let Friar John, in safety, still
 In chimney-corner snore his fill,
 Roast hissing crabs, or flagons swill:
 Last night, to Norham there came one,
 Will better guide Lord Marmion."—
 "Nephew," quoth Heron, "by my fay
 Well hast thou spoke; say forth thy say."

"Here is a holy Palmer come,
 From Salein first, and last from Rome;
 One, that hath kissed the blessed tomb,
 And visited each holy shrine,
 In Araby and Palestine.
 On hills of Armenie hath been,
 Where Noah's ark may yet be seen;
 By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
 Which parted at the prophet's rod;
 In Sinai's wilderness he saw
 The mount, where Israel heard the law,
 Mid thunder-dint, and flashing levin,
 And shadows, mists, and darkness, given.
 He shows Saint James's cockle-shell,
 Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell;

And of that Grot where Olives nod,
Where, darling of each heart and eye,
From all the youth of Sicily,
Saint Rosalie retired to God.

“To stout Saint George of Norwich merry,
Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
Cumbert of Durham and Saint Bede,
For his sins’ pardon hath he prayed.
He knows the passes of the North,
And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth;
Little he eats, and long will wake,
And drinks but of the stream or lake.
This were a guide o’er moor and dale;
But, when our John hath quaffed his ale,
As little as the wind that blows,
And warms itself against his nose,
Kens he, or cares, which way he goes.”—

“Gramercy!” quoth Lord Marmion,
“Full loth were I, that Friar John,
That venerable man, for me,
Were placed in fear, or jeopardy.
If this same Palmer will me lead
From hence to Holy-Rood,
Like his good saint, I’ll pay his meed,
Instead of cockle-shell, or bead,
With angels fair and good.
I love such holy rambles; still
They know to charm a weary hill,
With song, romance, or lay:
Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
Some lying legend at the least,
They bring to cheer the way.”—

"Ah! noble sir," young Selby said,
 And finger on his lip he laid,
 "This man knows much, perchance e'en more
 Than he could learn by holy lore.
 Still to himself he's muttering,
 And shrinks as at some unseen thing.
 Last night we listened at his cell;
 Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth to tell,
 He murmured on till morn, howe'er
 No living mortal could be near.
 Sometimes I thought I heard it plain,
 As other voices spoke again.
 I cannot tell — I like it not —
 Friar John hath told us it is wrote,
 No conscience clear, and void of wrong,
 Can rest awake, and pray so long.
 Himself still sleeps before his beads
 Have marked ten aves, and two creeds." —

"Let pass," quoth Marmion; "by my fay,
 This man shall guide me on my way,
 Although the great arch-fiend and he
 Had sworn themselves of company;
 So please you, gentle youth, to call
 This Palmer to the castle-hall." —
 The summoned Palmer came in place;
 His sable cowl o'erhung his face;
 In his black mantle was he clad,
 With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,
 On his broad shoulders wrought;
 The scallop shell his cap did deck;
 The crucifix around his neck
 Was from Loretto brought;

His sandals were with travel tore,
Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore;
The faded palm-branch in his hand,
Showed pilgrim from the Holy Land.

When as the Palmer came in hall,
Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
Or had a statelier step withal,

Or looked more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,

As he his peer had been.

But his gaunt frame was worn with toil;
His cheek was sunk, alas the while!
And when he struggled at a smile,

His eye looked haggard wild.

Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sun-burned hair,

She had not known her child.

Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know —
For deadly fear can time outgo,

And blanch at once the hair;

Hard toil can roughen form and face,
And want can quench the eye's bright grace,
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace,

More deeply than despair.

Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask;
The Palmer took on him the task,

So he would march with morning tide,
To Scottish court to be his guide.
—“But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair St. Andrew's bound,
Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound;
Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
And the crazed brain restore:—
Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
Could back to peace my bosom bring,
Or bid it throb no more!”—

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
Where wine and spices richly steep,
In massive bowl of silver deep,
The page presents on knee.
Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
The Captain pledged his noble guest,
The cup went through among the rest,
Who drained it merrily;
Alone the Palmer passed it by,
Though Selby pressed him courteously.
This was the sign the feast was o'er;
It hushed the merry wassail roar,
The minstrels ceased to sound.
Soon in the castle naught was heard,
But the slow footstep of the guard,
Pacing his sober round.

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose :
And first the chapel doors unclose ;
Then, after morning rites were done,
(A hasty mass from Friar John,)
And knight and squire had broke their fast
On rich substantial repast,
Lord Marmion's bugle blew to horse.
Then came the stirrup-cup in course ;
Between the Baron and his host,
No point of courtesy was lost :
High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
Solemn excuse the Captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had past
That noble train, their lord the last.

Then loudly rung the trumpet-call,
Thundered the cannon from the wall,
And shook the Scottish shore ;
Around the castle eddied, slow,
Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
And hid its turrets hoar ;
Till they rolled forth upon the air,
And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SECOND

THE scenes are desert now and bare,
Where flourished once a forest fair,
When these waste glens with copse were lined,
And peopled with the hart and hind.
Yon thorn — perchance whose prickly spears
Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green compeers —
Yon lonely thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so gray and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough;
Would he could tell how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan to the rock,
And through the foliage showed his head,
With narrow leaves, and berries red;
What pines on every mountain sprung,
O'er every dell what birches hung,
In every breeze what aspens shook,
What alders shaded every brook!

“Here, in my shade,” methinks he'd say,
“The mighty stag at noontide lay:
The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game,
(The neighboring dingle bears his name,)
With lurching step around me prowl,
And stop against the moon to howl;
The mountain boar, on battle set,
His tusks upon my stem would whet;

While doe and roe, and red-deer good,
Have bounded by through gay greenwood,
Then oft, from Newark's riven tower,
Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
A thousand vassals mustered round,
With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound;
And I might see the youth intent,
Guard every pass with cross-bow bent;
And through the brake the rangers stalk,
And falc'ners hold the ready hawk;
And foresters, in greenwood trim,
Lead to the leash the gaze-hounds grim,
Attentive, as the brachet's bay
From the dark covert drove the prey,
To slip them as he broke away.
The startled quarry bounds amain,
As fast the gallant grey-hounds strain;
Whistles the arrow from the bow,
Answers the harquebuss below;
While all the rocking hills reply,
To hoof-clang, hound, and hunter's cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely."—

Of such proud huntings, many tales
Yet linger in our lonely dales,
Up pathless Ettricke, and on Yarrow,
Where erst the Outlaw drew his arrow.
But not more blithe that sylvan court,
Than we have been at humbler sport;
Though small our pomp, and mean our game,
Our mirth, dear Marriott, was the same.
Remember'st thou my grey-hounds true?
O'er holt, or hill, there never flew,

From slip, or leash, there never sprang,
More fleet of foot, or sure of fang.
Nor dull, between each merry chase,
Passed by the intermitted space;
For we had fair resource in store,
In classic, and in Gothic lore:
We marked each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between;
Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along,
But had its legend, or its song.
All silent now — for now are still
Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill!
No longer, from thy mountains dun,
The yeoman hears the well-known gun,
And, while his honest heart glows warm,
At thought of his paternal farm,
Round to his mates a brimmer fills,
And drinks, "The Chieftain of the Hills!"
No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
Trip o'er the walks, or tend the flowers,
Fair as the elves whom Janet saw,
By moonlight, dance on Caterhaugh;
No youthful barons left to grace,
The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chase,
And ape, in manly step and tone,
The majesty of Oberon;
And she is gone, whose lovely face
Is but her least and lowest grace;
Though if to Sylphid Queen 'twere given,
To show our earth the charms of heaven,
She could not glide along the air,
With form more light, or face more fair.
No more the widow's deafened ear
Grows quick, that lady's step to hear:

At noontide she expects her not,
Nor busies her to trim the cot;
Pensive she turns her humming wheel,
Or pensive cooks her orphans' meal;
Yet blesses, ere she deals their bread,
The gentle hand by which they're fed.

From Yair, — which hills so closely bind,
Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,
Though much he fret, and chafe, and toil,
Till all his eddying currents boil,
Her long-descended lord is gone,
And left us by the stream alone.
And much I miss those sportive boys,
Companions of my mountain joys,
Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech, and speech is truth.
Close to my side, with what delight,
They pressed to hear of Wallace wight,
When, pointing to his airy mound,
I called his ramparts holy ground!
Kindled their brows to hear me speak;
And I have smiled, to feel my cheek,
Despite the difference of our years,
Return again the glow of theirs.
Ah, happy boys! such feelings pure,
They will not, cannot long endure;
Condemned to stem the world's rude tide,
You may not linger by the side;
For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,
And Passion ply the sail and oar,
Yet cherish the remembrance still,
Of the lone mountain, and the rill;

For trust, dear boys, the time will come,
When fiercer transport shall be dumb,
And you will think right frequently,
But, well I hope, without a sigh,
On the free hours that we have spent
Together, on the brown hill's bent.

When musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone,
Something, my friend, we yet may gain,
There is a pleasure in this pain:
It soothes the love of lonely rest,
Deep in each gentler heart impressed.
'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
And stifled soon by mental broils;
But, in a bosom thus prepared,
Its still small voice is often heard,
Whispering a mingled sentiment,
'Twixt resignation and content.
Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
By lone St. Mary's silent lake;
Thou know'st it well, — nor fen, nor sedge,
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge;
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink;
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land.
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view;
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake is there,
Save where, of land, yon slender line
Bears thwart the lake the scattered pine.

Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour:
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing concealed might lie;
Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,
Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell;
There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness:
And silence aids—though these steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills;
In summer tide, so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude.

Naught living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near;
For though, in feudal strife, a foe
Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low,
Yet still, beneath the hallowed soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil,
And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
Where erst his simple fathers prayed.

If age had tamed the passions' strife,
And fate had cut my ties to life,
Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet to dwell,
And rear again the chaplain's cell,
Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton longed to spend his age
'Twere sweet to mark the setting day,
On Bourhope's lonely top decay;
And, as it faint and feeble died,
On the broad lake, and mountain's side,

To say, "Thus pleasures fade away;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and gray;"—
Then gaze on Dryhope's ruined tower,
And think on Yarrow's faded Flower.
And when that mountain-sound I heard,
Which bids us be for storm prepared,
The distant rustling of his wings,
As up his force the Tempest brings,
'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
'To sit upon the Wizard's grave;
That Wizard Priest's, whose bones are thrust
From company of holy dust;
On which no sunbeam ever shines—
(So superstition's creed divines—)
'Thence view the lake, with sullen roar,
Heave her broad billows to the shore;
And mark the wild swans mount the gale,
Spread wide through mist their snowy sail,
And ever stoop again, to lave
Their bosoms on the surging wave:
Then, when against the driving hail,
No longer might my plaid avail,
Back to my lonely home retire,
And light my lamp, and trim my fire:
There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
Till the wild tale had all its sway,
And, in the bittern's distant shriek,
I heard unearthly voices speak,
And thought the Wizard Priest was come,
To claim again his ancient home!
And bade my busy fancy range,
To frame him fitting shape and strange,

Till from the task my brow I cleared,
And smiled to think that I had feared.

But chief, 'twere sweet to think such life,
(Though but escape from fortune's strife,)
Something most matchless good, and wise,
A great and grateful sacrifice;
And deem each hour, to musing given,
A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease,
Such painful solitudes displease:
He loves to drown his bosom's jar
Amid the elemental war:
And my black Palmer's choice had been
Some ruder and more savage scene,
Like that which frowns round dark Lochskene,
There eagles scream from isle to shore;
Down all the rocks the torrents roar;
O'er the black waves incessant driven,
Dark mists infect the summer heaven;
Through the rude barriers of the lake,
Away its hurrying waters break,
Faster and whiter dash and curl,
Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.
Rises the fog-smoke white as snow,
Thunders the viewless stream below,
Diving, as if condemned to lave
Some demon's subterranean cave,
Who, prisoned by enchanter's spell,
Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.
And well that Palmer's form and mein
Had suited with the stormy scene,

Just on the edge, straining his ken
To view the bottom of the den,
Where, deep deep down, and far within,
Toils with the rocks the roaring linn;
Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,
And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,
White as the snowy charger's tail
Drives down the path at Moffatdale.

Marriot, thy harp, on Isis strung,
To many a Border theme has rung:
Then list to me, and thou shalt know
Of this mysterious Man of Woe.



CANTO SECOND.

THE CONVENT.

'THE breeze, which swept away the smoke,
Round Norham Castle rolled;
When all the loud artillery spoke,
With lightning-flash, and thunder-stroke,
As Marmion left the Hold.
It curled not Tweed alone, that breeze:
For far upon Northumbrian seas,

It freshly blew, and strong,
 Where, from high Whitby's cloistered pile,
 Bound to Saint Cuthbert's Holy Isle,
 It bore a bark along.
 Upon the gale she stooped her side,
 And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
 As she were dancing home ;
 The merry seamen laughed, to see
 Their gallant ship so lustily
 Furrow the green sea-foam.
 Much joyed they in their honored freight ;
 For, on the deck, in chair of state,
 The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
 With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
 Like birds escaped to greenwood shades,
 Their first flight from the cage,
 How timid, and how curious too,
 For all to them was strange and new,
 And all the common sights they view,
 Their wonderment engage.
 One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
 With many a benedicite ;
 One at the rippling surge grew pale,
 And would for terror pray ;
 Then shrieked, because the sea-dog, nigh,
 His round black head, and sparkling eye,
 Reared o'er the foaming spray ;
 And one would still adjust her veil,
 Disordered by the summer gale,
 Perchance lest some more worldly eye
 Her dedicated charms might spy ;

Perchance, because such action graced
Her fair-turned arm and slender waist.
Light was each simple bosom there,
Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—
The Abbess, and the Novice Clare.

The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood,
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook.
Fair too she was, and kind had been
As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
For her a timid lover sigh,
Nor knew the influence of her eye ;
Love, to her ear, was but a name,
Combined with vanity and shame ;
Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
Bounded within the cloister wall :
The deadliest sin her mind could reach,
Was of monastic rule the breach ;
And her ambition's highest aim,
To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
For this she gave her ample dower,
To raise the convent's eastern tower ;
For this, with carving rare and quaint,
She decked the chapel of the saint,
And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
With ivory and gems embost.
The poor her convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reformed on Benedictine school ;

Her cheek was pale, her form was spare ;
Vigils, and penitence austere,
Had early quenched the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame in sooth ;
Though vain of her religious sway,
She loved to see her maids obey,
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
Sad was this voyage to the dame ;
Summoned to Lindisfarn, she came,
There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old,
And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold
A chapter of Saint Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict,
On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

Naught say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair ;
As yet a novice unprofessed,
Lovely, and gentle, but distressed.
She was betrothed to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonored fled.
Her kinsman bade her give her hand
To one, who loved her for her land :
Herself almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud, within Saint Hilda's gloom,
Her blasted hopes and withered bloom.

She sate upon the galley's prow,
And seemed to mark the waves below ;
Nay seemed, so fixed her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by.

She saw them not — 'twas seeming all —
For other scene her thoughts recall, —
A sun-scorched desert, waste and bare,
Nor wave, nor breezes, murmured there ;
There saw she, where some careless hand
O'er a dead corpse had heaped the sand,
To hide it till the jackalls come,
To tear it from the scanty tomb. —
See what a woful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven !

Lovely, and gentle, and distressed —
These charms might tame the fiercest breast :
Harpers have sung, and poets told,
That he, in fury uncontrolled,
The shaggy monarch of the wood,
Before a virgin fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood.
But passion in the human frame
Oft put the lion's rage to shame :
And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
With sordid avarice in league,
Had practiced, with their bowl and knife,
Against the mourner's harmless life.
This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay
Prisoned in Cuthbert's islet gray.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland ;
Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,
And catch the nuns' delighted eyes ;
Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay,
And Tynesmouth's priory and bay ;

They marked, amid her trees, the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;
They passed the tower of Widderington,
Mother of many a valiant son;
At Coquet-isle their beads they tell,
To the good Saint who owned the cell;
Then did the Alne attention claim,
And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name;
And next, they crossed themselves, to hear
The whitening breakers sound so near,
Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar
On Dunstanborough's caverned shore;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, marked **they here**,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reached the Holy Island's bay.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain:
For with the flow and ebb, its stile
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandaled feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The Castle, with its battled walls,
The ancient monastery's halls,

A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

In Saxon strength that Abbey frowned,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,
The arcades of an alleys walk,
To emulate in stone.

On the deep walls, the heathen Dane
Had poured his impious rage in vain;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the wind's eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilt in a later style,
Showed where the spoiler's hand had been;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And mouldered in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,
The pointed angles of each tower;
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

Soon as they neared his turrets strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
And with the sea-wave and the wind,
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,

And made harmonious close ;
Then, answering from the sandy shore,
Half-drowned amid the breakers' roar,
According chorus rose :
Down to the haven of the Isle,
The monks and nuns in order file,
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim ;
Banner, and cross, and relics there,
To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bare :
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders, in joyous mood,
Rushed emulously through the flood,
To hale the bark to land ;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And blessed them with her hand.

Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the Convent banquet made ;
All through the holy dome,
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallowed eye,
The stranger sisters roam ;
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there, even summer night is chill.
Then, having strayed and gazed their fill,
They closed around the fire :
And all, in turn, essayed to paint
The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire

A holy maid: for, be it known,
That their saint's honor is their own.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,
How to their house three barons bold
Must menial service do;
While horns blow out a note of shame,
And monks cry "Fye upon your name!
In wrath for loss of sylvan game,
Saint Hilda's priest ye slew."
"This, on Ascension-day, each year,
While laboring on our harbor-pier,
Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear."
They told, how in their convent cell
A Saxon princess once did dwell,
The lovely Edelfled;
And how, of thousand snakes, each one
Was changed into a coil of stone,
When holy Hilda prayed;
Themselves, within their holy bound,
Their stony folds had often found.
They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail,
As over Whitby's towers they sail,
And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,
They do their homage to the saint.

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail,
To vie with these in holy tale;
His body's resting-place, of old,
How oft their patron changed, they told;
How, when the rude Dane burned their pile,
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle;

O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
 From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
 Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore.

They rested them in fair Melrose ;

But though, alive, he loved it well,
 Not there his relics might repose ;

For, wondrous tale to tell !

In his stone-coffin forth he rides,
 (A ponderous bark for river tides,)

Yet light as gossamer it glides

Downward to Tillmouth cell.

Nor long was his abiding there,
 For southward did the saint repair ;
 Chester-le-Street, and Rippon, saw
 His holy corse, ere Wardilaw

Hailed him with joy and fear ;

And, after many wanderings past,

He chose his lordly seat at last,

Where his cathedral, huge and vast,

Looks down upon the Wear ;

There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade,

His relics are in secret laid ;

But none may know the place,

Save of his holiest servants three,

Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,

Who share that wondrous grace.

Who may his miracles declare !

Even Scotland's dauntless king and heir,

(Although with them they led

Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,

And Lodon's knights all sheathed in mail,

And the bold men of Teviotdale,)

Before his standard fled.

'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turned the conqueror back again,
When, with his Norman bowyer band,
He came to waste Northumberland.

But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would learn,
If, on a rock by Lindisfarn,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name:
Such tale had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound;
A deadened clang—a huge dim form,
Seen but, and heard, when gathering storm
And night were closing round.
But this, as tale of idle fame,
The nuns of Lindisfarn disclaim.

While round the fire such legends go,
Far different was the scene of woe,
Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
Council was held of life and death.

It was more dark and lone that vault,
Than the worst dungeon cell;
Old Colwulf built it, for his fault,
In penitence to dwell,
When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
This den, which, chilling every sense
Of feeling, hearing, sight,
Was called the Vault of Penitence,
Excluding air and light,

Was, by the prelate Saxhelm, made
A place of burial, for such dead
As, having died in mortal sin,
Might not be laid the church within.
'Twas now a place of punishment;
Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,
As reached the upper air,
The hearers blessed themselves, and said,
The spirits of the sinful dead
Bemoaned their torments there.

But though, in the monastic pile,
Did of this penitential aisle
Some vague tradition go,
Few only, save the Abbot, knew
Where the place lay; and still more few
Were those, who had from him the clew
To that dread vault to go.
Victim and executioner
Were blindfold when transported there.
In low dark rounds the arches hung,
From the rude rock the side-walls sprung;
The grave-stones, rudely sculptured o'er,
Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
Were all the pavement of the floor;
The mildew drops fell one by one,
With tinkling splash, upon the stone.
A cresset in an iron chain,
Which served to light this drear domain,
With damp and darkness seemed to strive,
As if it scarce might keep alive;
And yet it dimly served to show
The awful conclave met below.

There, met to doom in secrecy,
Were placed the heads of convents three:
All servants of Saint Benedict,
The statutes of whose order strict
 On iron table lay;
In long black dress, on seats of stone,
Behind were these three judges shown,
 By the pale cresset's ray:
The Abbess of Saint Hilda's there,
Sate for a space with visage bare,
Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
And tear-drops that for pity fell,
 She closely drew her veil;
Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
By her proud mien and flowing dress,
Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress.
 And she with awe looks pale:
And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight
Has long been quenched by age's night,
Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,
Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace is shown,
 Whose look is hard and stern,—
Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style;
For sanctity called, through the isle,
 The Saint of Lindisfarn.

Before them stood a guilty pair;
But, though an equal fate they share,
Yet one alone deserves our care.
Her sex a page's dress belied:
The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
Obscured her charms, but could not hide.
Her cap down o'er her face she drew;
 And, on her doublet breast,

She tried to hide the badge of blue,
Lord Marmion's falcon crest.
But, at the Prioress' command,
A Monk undid the silken band,
That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her head,
And down her slender form they spread,
In ringlets rich and rare.
Constance de Beverly they know,
Sister professed of Fontevraud,
Whom the church numbered with the dead,
For broken vows, and convent fled.

When thus her face was given to view,
(Although so pallid was her hue,
It did a ghastly contrast bear,
To those bright ringlets glistening fair,)
Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy ;
And there she stood so calm and pale,
That but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted,
That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
You might have thought a form of wax,
Wrought to the life, was there ;
So still she was, so pale, so fair.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed ;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, seared and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed ;

One, whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
Beyond his own more brute desires.
Such tools the tempter ever needs,
To do the savagest of deeds ;
For them no visioned terrors daunt,
Their nights no fancied spectres haunt ;
One fear with them, of all most base,
The fear of death, — alone finds place.
This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound beneath the lash ;
While his mute partner, standing near,
Waited her doom without a tear.

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
Well might her paleness terror speak !
For there were seen, in that dark wall,
Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall.
Who enters at such griesly door,
Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more
In each a slender meal was laid,
Of roots, of water, and of bread :
By each, in Benedictine dress,
Two haggard monks stood motionless ;
Who, holding high a blazing torch,
Showed the grim entrance of the porch :
Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
Hewn stones and cement were displayed,
And building tools in order laid.

These executioners were chose,
As men who were with mankind foes,

And, with despite and envy fired,
Into the cloister had retired ;
Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,
Strove, by deep penance, to efface
Of some foul crime the stain ;
For, as the vassals of her will,
Such men the church selected still,
As either joyed in doing ill,
Or thought more grace to gain,
If, in her cause, they wrestled down
Feelings their nature strove to own.
By strange device were they brought there,
They knew not how, and knew not where.

And now that blind old Abbot rose,
To speak the Chapter's doom,
On those the wall was to enclose
Alive, within the tomb ;
But stopped, because that woful maid,
Gathering her powers, to speak essayed.
Twice she essayed, and twice in vain ;
Her accents might no utterance gain ;
Naught but imperfect murmurs slip
From her convulsed and quivering lip :
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
You seemed to hear a distant rill —
'Twas ocean's swells and falls ;
For though this vault of sin and fear
Was to the sounding surge so near,
A tempest there you scarce could hear,
So massive were the walls.

At length, an effort sent apart
The blood that curdled to her heart,

And light came to her eye,
 And color dawned upon her cheek,
 A hectic and a fluttered streak,
 Like that left on the Cheviot peak,
 By Autumn's stormy sky ;
 And when her silence broke at length,
 Still as she spoke, she gathered strength,
 And armed herself to bear.

It was a fearful sight to see
 Such high resolve and constancy,
 In form so soft and fair.

"I speak not to implore your grace ;
 Well know I, for one minute's space
 Successful might I sue :
 Nor do I speak your prayers to gain ;
 For if a death of lingering pain,
 To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,
 Vain are your masses too. —

I listened to a traitor's tale,
 I left the convent and the veil,
 For three long years I bowed my pride,
 A horse-boy in his train to ride ;
 And well my folly's meed he gave,
 Who forfeited, to be his slave,
 All here, and all beyond the grave. —
 He saw young Clara's face more fair,
 He knew her of broad lands the heir,
 Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
 And Constance was beloved no more. —

'Tis an old tale, and often told ;

But, did my fate and wish agree,
 Ne'er had been read, in story old,
 Of maiden true betrayed for gold,
 That loved, or was avenged, like me !

"The king approved his favorite's aim;
 In vain a rival barred his claim,
 Whose faith with Clare's was plight,
 For he attaints that rival's fame
 With treason's charge — and on they came,
 In mortal lists to fight.
 Their oaths are said,
 Their prayers are prayed,
 Their lances in the rest are laid,
 They meet in mortal shock;
 And hark! the throng, with thundering cry
 Shout, 'Marmion, Marmion, to the sky!
 De Wilton to the block!'
 Say ye, who preach heaven shall decide,
 When in the lists two champions ride,
 Say, was heaven's justice here?
 When, loyal in his love and faith,
 Wilton found overthrow or death,
 Beneath a traitor's spear.
 How false the charge, how true he fell,
 This guilty packet best can tell." —
 Then drew a packet from her breast,
 Paused, gathered voice, and spoke the rest.

"Still was false Marmion's bridal staid;
 Whitby's convent fled the maid,
 The hated match to shun.
 'Ho! shifts she thus?' King Henry cried,
 'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,
 If she were sworn a nun.'
 One way remained — the king's command
 Sent Marmion to the Scottish land:
 I lingered here, and rescue planned
 For Clara and for me:

This catiff Monk, for gold, did swear,
He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
And, by his drugs, my rival fair
 A saint in heaven should be.
But ill the dastard kept his oath,
Whose cowardice hath undone us both.

“And now my tongue the secret tells,
Not that remorse my bosom swells,
But to assure my soul, that none
Shall ever wed with Marmion.
Had fortune my last hope betrayed,
This packet, to the king conveyed,
Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
Although my heart that instant broke. —
Now, men of death, work forth your will,
For I can suffer, and be still;
And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but death who comes at last.

“Yet dread me, from my living tomb,
Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome!
If Marmion's late remorse should wake,
Full soon such vengeance will he take,
That you shall wish the fiery Dane
Had rather been your guest again.
Behind, a darker hour ascends!
The altars quake, the crosier bends,
The ire of a despotic king
Rides forth upon destruction's wing;
Then shall these vaults, so strong and deep,
Burst open to the sea-winds' sweep;
Some traveller then shall find my bones,
Whitening amid disjointed stones,

And, ignorant of priests' cruelty,
Marvel such relics here should be." —

Fixed was her look, and stern her air;
Back from her shoulders streamed her hair;
The locks, that wont her brow to shade,
Stared up erectly from her head;
Her figure seemed to rise more high;
Her voice, despair's wild energy
Had given a tone of prophecy.
Appalled the astonished conclave sate;
With stupid eyes, the men of fate
Gazed on the light inspired form,
And listened for the avenging storm;
The judges felt the victim's dread;
No hand was moved, no word was said,
Till thus the Abbot's doom was given,
Raising his sightless balls to heaven: —
"Sister, let thy sorrows cease;
Sinful brother, part in peace!" —

From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
Of execution too, and tomb,
Paced forth the judges three;
Sorrow it were, and shame, to tell
The butcher-work that there befell,
When they had glided from the cell
Of sin and misery.

An hundred winding steps convey
That conclave to the upper day;
But, ere they breathed the fresher air,
They heard the shriekings of despair,

And many a stifled groan :
With speed their upward way they take,
(Such speed as age and fear can make,)
And crossed themselves for terror's sake,
As hurrying, tottering on.
Even in the vesper's heavenly tone,
They seemed to hear a dying groan,
And bade the passing knell to toll
For welfare of a parting soul.
Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
Northumbrian rocks in answer rung :
To Warkworth cell the echoes rolled,
His beads the wakeful hermit told ;
The Bamborough peasant raised his head,
But slept ere half a prayer he said ;
So far was heard the mighty knell,
The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
Listed before, aside, behind ;
Then couched him down beside the hind,
And quaked among the mountain fern,
To hear that sound so dull and stern.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO THIRD.

LIKE April morning clouds, that pass,
With varying shadow, o'er the grass,
And imitate, on field and furrow,
Life's checkered scene of joy and sorrow ;
Like streamlet of the mountain north,
Now in a torrent racing forth,
Now winding slow its silver train,
And almost slumbering on the plain ;
Like breezes of the autumn day,
Whose voice inconstant dies away,
And ever swells again as fast,
When the ear deems its murmur past ;
Thus various, my romantic theme
Flits, winds, or sinks, a morning dream.
Yet pleased, our eye pursues the trace
Of Light and Shade's inconstant race ;
Pleased, views the rivulet afar,
Weaving its maze irregular ;
And pleased, we listen as the breeze
Heaves its wild sigh through Autumn trees.
Then wild as cloud, or stream, or gale,
Flow on, flow unconfined, my tale.

Need I to thee, dear Erskine, tell,
I love the license all too well,
In sound now lowly, and now strong,
To raise the desultory song?—
Oft, when mid such capricious chime,
Some transient fit of loftier rhyme,

To thy kind judgment seemed excuse
For many an error of the muse ;
Oft hast thou said, " If still misspent,
Thine hours to poetry are lent,
Go, and to tame thy wandering course,
Quaff from the fountain at the source ;
Approach those masters, o'er whose tomb
Immortal laurels ever bloom :
Instructive of the feebler bard,
Still from the grave their voice is heard ;
From them, and from the paths they showed,
Choose honored guide and practised road ;
Nor ramble on through brake and maze,
With harpers rude, of barbarous days.

" Or deem'st thou not our later time
Yields topic meet for classic rhyme ?
Hast thou no elegaic verse
For Brunswick's venerable hearse ?
What ! not a line, a tear, a sigh,
When valor bleeds for liberty ? —
Oh, hero, of that glorious time,
When, with unrivalled light sublime, —
Through martial Austria, and through all
The might of Russia and the Gaul,
Though banded Europe stood her foes —
The star of Bradenburgh arose,
Thou could'st not live to see her beam
For ever quenched in Jena's stream.
Lamented chief ! — it was not given
To thee to change the doom of heaven,
And crush that dragon in his birth,
Predestined scourge of guilty earth.

Lamented chief! — not thine the power,
To save in that presumptuous hour,
When Prussia hurried to the field,
And snatched the spear, but left the shield;
Valor and skill 'twas thine to try,
And, tried in vain, 'twas thine to die.
Ill had it seemed thy silver hair
The last, the bitterest pang to share,
For princedoms reft, and scutcheons riven,
And birthrights to usurpers given;
Thy land's, thy children's wrongs to feel,
And witness woes thou could'st not heal!
On thee relenting heaven bestows
For honored life an honored close;
And when revolves, in time's sure change,
The hour of Germany's revenge,
When, breathing fury for her sake,
Some new Arminius shall awake,
Her champion, ere he strike, shall come
To whet his sword on BRUNSWICK'S tomb.

“Or of the Red-Cross hero teach,
Dauntless in dungeon as on breach;
Alike to him the sea, the shore,
The brand, the bridle, or the oar;
Alike to him the war that calls
Its votaries to the shattered walls,
Which the grim Turk besmeared with blood,
Against the Invincible made good;
Or that, whose thundering voice could wake
The silence of the polar lake,
When stubborn Russ, and metaled Swede,
On the warped wave their death-game played;

Or that, where vengeance and affright
Howled round the father of the fight,
Who snatched on Alexandria's sand
The conqueror's wreath with dying hand.

“Or, if to touch such chord be thine,
Restore the ancient tragic line,
And emulate the notes that rung
From the wild harp which silent hung
By silver Avon's holy shore,
Till twice an hundred years rolled o'er;
When she, the bold Enchantress, came,
With fearless hand and heart on flame!
From the pale willow snatched the treasure,
And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
With Monfort's hate and Basil's love,
Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deemed their own Shakspeare lived again.”—

Thy friendship thus thy judgment wronging,
With praises not to me belonging,
In task more meet for mightiest powers,
Would'st thou engage my thriftless hours.
But say, my Erskine, hast thou weighed
That secret power by all obeyed,
Which warps not less the passive mind,
Its source concealed or undefined;
Whether an impulse, that has birth
Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
One with our feelings and our powers,
And rather part of us than ours;
Or whether fitlier termed the sway
Of habit, formed in early day?

Howe'er derived, its force confessed
Rules with despotic sway the breast,
And drags us on by viewless chain,
While taste and reason plead in vain
Look east, and ask the Belgian why,
Beneath Batavia's sultry sky,
He seeks not eager to inhale
The freshness of the mountain gale,
Content to rear his whitened wall
Beside the dank and dull canal?
He'll say, from youth he loved to see
The white sail gliding by the tree.
Or see yon weather-beaten hind,
Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
Whose tattered plaid and rugged cheek
His northeru clime and kindred speak;
Through England's laughing meads he goes,
And England's wealth around him flows:
Ask if it would content him well,
At ease in these gay plains to dwell,
Where hedge-rows spread a verdant screen,
And spires and forests intervene,
And the neat cottage peeps between?
No! not for these will he exchange
His dark Lochabar's boundless range,
Nor for fair Devon's meads forsake
Bennevis grey and Garry's lake.

Thus, while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charmed me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.

Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charmed my fancy's wakening hour.
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song ;
Though sighed no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale ;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claimed homage from a shepherd's reed ;
Yet was poetic impulse given,
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled ;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green ;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honeysuckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruined wall ;
I deemed such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all his round surveyed ;
And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power ;
And marvelled, as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitched my mind,
Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurred their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, filled the hall
With revel, wassail-rout, and brawl. —
Methought that still with tramp and clang
The gate-way's broken arches rang ;
Methought grim features, seamed with scars,
Glared through the windows' rusty bars.

And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of wo or mirth,
Of lovers' sleights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;
Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away,
While stretched at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war displayed;
And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scattered Southron fled before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I trace
Anew, each kind familiar face,
That brightened at our evening fire;
From the thatched mansion's gray-haired Sire,
Wise without learning plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Showed what in youth its glance had been;
Whose doom discording neighbors sought,
Content with equity unbought;
To him the venerable Priest,
Our frequent and familiar guest,
Whose life and manners well could paint
Alike the student and the saint;
Alas! whose speech too oft I broke
With gambol rude and timeless joke:

For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
A self-willed imp, a grandame's child;
But half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endured, beloved, carest.

From me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
The classic poet's well-conned task?
Nay, Erskine, nay — on the wild hill
Let the wild heathbell flourish still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimmed the eglantine:
Nay, my friend, nay — since oft thy praise
Hath given fresh vigor to my lays,
Since oft thy judgment could refine
My flattered thought, or cumbrous line,
Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
And in the minstrel spare the friend.
Though wild as cloud, as streams, as gale,
Flow forth, flow unrestrained, my tale!

CANTO THIRD.

THE HOSTEL, OR INN.

THE livelong day Lord Marmion rode :
The mountain path the Palmer showed ;
By glen and streamlet winded still,
Where stunted birches hid the rill.
They might not choose the lowland road,
For the Merse forayers were abroad,
Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey,
Had scarcely failed to bar the way.
Oft on the trampling band, from crown
Of some tall cliff, the deer looked down ;
On wing of jet, from his repose
In the deep heath, the black-cock rose :
Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
Nor waited for the bending bow ;
And when the stony path began,
By which the naked peak they wan,
Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.
The noon had long been passed before
They gained the height of Lammermoor
'Thence winding down the northern way
Before them, at the close of day,
Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay.

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour.
To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone :
His cautious dame, in bower alone,

Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes.
On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch, whose front was graced
With bush and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein:
The village inn seemed large, though rude,
Its cheerful fire and haughty food
Might well relieve his train.
Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
With jingling spurs the court-yard rung;
They bind their horses to the stall,
For forage, food, and firing call,
And various clamor fills the hall.
Weighing the labor with the cost,
Toils everywhere the busting host.

Soon by the chimney's merry blaze,
Through the rude hostel might you gaze;
Might see, where, in dark nook aloof,
The rafters of the sooty roof
Bore wealth of winter cheer:
Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,
And gammons of the tusky boar,
And savory haunch of deer.
The chimney arch projected wide;
Above, around it, and beside,
Were tools for housewives' hand:
Nor wanted, in that martial day,
The implements of Scottish fray,
The buckler, lance, and brand.
Beneath its shade, the place of state,
On oaken settle Marmion sate,

And viewed around the blazing hearth,
His followers mix in noisy mirth,
Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
From ancient vessels ranged aside,
Full actively their host supplied.

Their's was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter their's at little jest ;
And oft Lord Marmion deigned to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made,
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, trained in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldier's hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May ;
With open hand, and brow as free,
Lover of wine, and minstrelsy ;
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower : —
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood ;
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fixed on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
Strove by a frown to quell ;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The Palmer's visage fell.

By fits less frequent from the crowd
 Was heard the burst of laughter loud;
 For still, as squire and archer stared
 On that dark face and matted beard,
 Their glee and game declined.
 All gazed at length in silence drear,
 Unbroke, save when in comrade's ear
 Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,
 Thus whispered forth his mind:—
 "Saint Mary! saw'st thou e'er such sight!
 How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,
 Whene'er the fire-brand's fickle light
 Glances beneath his cowl!
 Full on our Lord he sets his eye;
 For his best palfrey, would not I
 Endure that sullen scowl."—

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
 Which thus had quelled their hearts, who saw
 The ever-varying fire-light show
 That figure stern and face of wo,
 Now called upon a squire:—
 "Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay,
 To speed the lingering night away?
 We slumber by the fire."—

"So please you," thus the youth rejoined,
 "Our choicest minstrel's left behind.
 Ill may we hope to please your ear,
 Accustomed Constant's strains to hear.
 The harp full deftly can he strike,
 And wake the lover's lute alike;
 To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush
 Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush

No nightingale her love-lorn tune
 More sweetly warbles to the moon.
 Wo to the cause, whate'er it be,
 Detains from us his melody,
 Lavished on rocks, and billows stern,
 Or duller monks of Lindisfarn.
 Now must I venture as I may,
 To sing his favorite roundelay." —

A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
 The air he chose was wild and sad;
 Such have I heard, in Scottish land,
 Rise from the busy harvest band,
 When falls before the mountaineer,
 On lowland plains, the ripened ear.
 Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
 Now a wild chorus swells the song:
 Oft have I listened, and stood still,
 As it came softened up the hill,
 And deemed it the lament of men
 Who languished for their native glen;
 And thought, how sad would be such sound,
 On Susquehana's swampy ground,
 Kentucky's wood-encumbered brake,
 Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
 Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
 Recalled fair Scotland's hills again!

SONG.

Where shall the lover rest,
 Whom the fates sever
 From his true maiden's breast,
 Parted for ever?

Where, through groves deep and high,
 Sounds the far billow,
 Where early violets die,
 Under the willow.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
 Cool streams are laving;
 There, while the tempests sway,
 Scarce are boughs waving;
 There, thy rest shalt thou take,
 Parted for ever,
 Never again to wake,
 Never, O never.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never.

Where shall the traitor rest,
 He, the deceiver,
 Who could win maiden's breast,
 Ruin, and leave her?
 In the lost battle,
 Borne down by the flying,
 Where mingles war's rattle,
 With groans of the dying.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap,
 O'er the false-hearted;
 His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
 Ere life be parted.
 Shame and dishonor sit
 By his grave ever:
 Blessing shall hallow it, —
 Never, O never.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never.

It ceased, the melancholy sound;
 And silence sunk on all around.
 The air was sad; but sadder still
 It fell on Marmion's ear,
 And plained as if disgrace and ill,
 And shameful death, were near.
 He drew his mantle past his face,
 Between it and the band,
 And rested with his head a space,
 Reclining on his hand.
 His thoughts I scan not; but I ween,
 That, could their import have been seen,
 The meanest groom in all the hall,
 That e'er tied courser to a stall,
 Would scarce have wished to be their prey,
 For Lutterward and Fontenaye.

High minds, of native pride and force,
 Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse!
 Fear for their scourge, mean villains have,
 Thou art the torturer of the brave;

Yet fatal strength they boast to steel
Their minds to bear the wounds they feel;
Even while they writhe beneath the smart
Of civil conflict in the heart.

For soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
And, smiling, to Fitz-Eustace said:—

“Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
Seemed in mine ear a death-peal rung,
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister’s soul?

Say, what may this portend?”
Then first the Palmer silence broke,
(The livelong day he had not spoke,)
“The death of a dear friend.”

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
Ne’er changed in worst extremity;
Marmion, whose soul could scantily brook,
Even from his king, a haughty look;
Whose accent of command controlled,
In camps the boldest of the bold—
Thought, look, and utterance, failed him now,
Fallen was his glance, and flushed his brow;

For either in the tone,
Or something in the Palmer’s look,
So full upon his conscience strook.

That answer he found none.
Thus oft it haps, that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,

A feather daunts the brave:
A fool’s wild speech confounds the wise,
And proudest princes veil their eyes
Before their meanest slave.

Well might he falter! — by his aid
Was Constance Beverly betrayed;
Not that he augured of the doom,
Which on the living closed the tomb,
But tired to hear the desperate maid
Threaten by turns, besecch, upbraid;
And wroth, because, in wild despair,
She practiced on the life of Clare;
Its fugitive the church he gave,
Though not a victim, but a slave;
And deemed restraint in convent strange,
Would hide her wrongs, and her revenge;
Himself, proud Henry's favorite peer,
Held Romish thunders idle fear,
Secure his pardon he might hold,
For some slight mulct of penance-gold.
Thus judging, he gave secret way,
When the stern priests surprised their prey;
His train but deemed the favorite page
Was left behind, to spare his age;
Or other if they deemed, none dared
To mutter what he thought and heard:
Wo to the vassal, who durst pry
Into Lord Marmion's privacy!

His conscience slept — he deemed her well,
And safe secured in distant cell;
But wakened by her favorite lay,
And that strange Palmer's boding say,
That fell so ominous and drear,
Full on the object of his fear,
To aid remorse's venom'd throes,
Dark tales of convent vengeance rose;

And Constance, late betrayed and scorned,
All lovely on his soul returned ;
Lovely as when, at treacherous call,
She left her convent's peaceful wall,
Crimsoned with shame, with terror mute,
Dreading alike escape, pursuit,
Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

"Alas!" he thought, "how changed that mien!
How changed these timid looks have been,
Since years of guilt, and of disguise,
Have steeled her brow, and armed her eyes!
No more of virgin terror speaks
The blood that mantles in her cheeks ;
Fierce, and unfeminine, are there,
Frenzy for joy, for grief despair ;
And I the cause — for whom were given
Her peace on earth, her hopes in heaven! —
Would," thought he, as the picture grows,
"I on its stalk had left the rose!
Oh why should man's success remove
The very charms that wake his love!
Her convent's peaceful solitude
Is now a prison harsh and rude ;
And, pent within the narrow cell,
How will her spirit chafe and swell!
How brook the stern monastic laws!
The penance how — and I the cause!
Vigil and scourge — perchance even worse!"
And twice he rose to cry "to horse!"
And twice his sovereign's mandate came,
Like damp upon a kindling flame ;

And twice he thought, "Gave I not charge
She should be safe, though not at large?
They durst not, for their island, shred
One golden ringlet from her head." —

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
Repentance and reviving love,
Like whirlwinds, whose contending sway
I've seen Loch Vennachar obey,
Their Host the Palmer's speech had heard,
And talkative, took up the word: —

“Ay, reverend Pilgrim, you, who stray
From Scotland's simple land away,

To visit realms afar,

Full often learn the art to know,
Of future weal or future wo,

By word, or sign, or star;

Yet might a knight his fortune hear,

If, knight-like, he despises fear,

Not far from hence; — if fathers old

Aright our hamlet legend told.” —

These broken words the menials move,

(For marvels still the vulgar love,)

And, Marmion giving license cold,

His tale the host thus gladly told.

THE HOST'S TALE.

“A clerk could tell what years have flown
Since Alexander filled our throne,
(Third monarch of that warlike name,)
And eke the time when here he came

To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord :
A braver never drew a sword ;
A wiser never, at the hour
Of midnight spoke the word of power ;
The same, whom ancient records call
The founder of the Goblin-Hall.
I would, Sir Knight, your longer stay
Gave you that cavern to survey.
Of lofty roof, and ample size,
Beneath the castle deep it lies :
To hew the living rock profound,
The floor to pave, the arch to round,
There never toiled a mortal arm,
It all was wrought by word and charm ;
And I have heard my grandsire say,
That the wild clamor and affray
Of those dread artizans of hell,
Who labored under Hugo's spell,
Sounded as loud as ocean's war,
Among the caverns of Dunbar.

“The king Lord Gifford's castle sought,
Deep-laboring with uncertain thought :
Even then he mustered all his host,
To meet upon the western coast ;
For Norse and Danish galleys plied
Their oars within the Firth of Clyde.
There floated Haco's banner trim,
Above Norweyan warriors grim,
Savage of heart, and large of limb ;
Threatening both continent and isle,
Bute, Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle.
Lord Gifford, deep beneath the ground,
Heard Alexander's bugle sound,

And tarried not his garb to change,
But, in his wizard habit strange,
Came forth,—a quaint and fearful sight!
His mantle lined with fox-skins white;
His high and wrinkled forehead bore
A pointed cap, such as of yore
Clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi wore;
His shoes were marked with cross and spell;
Upon his breast a pentacle;
His zone, of virgin parchment thin,
Or, as some tell, of dead men's skin,
Bore many a planetary sign,
Combust, and retrograde, and trine;
And in his hand he held prepared,
A naked sword without a guard.

“Dire dealings with the fiendish race
Had marked strange lines upon his face;
Vigil and fast had worn him grim,
His eyesight dazzled seemed, and dim,
As one unused to upper day;
Even his own menials with dismay
Beheld Sir Knight, the griesly sire,
In this unwonted wild attire;—
Unwonted, for traditions run,
He seldom thus beheld the sun.
'I know,' he said,—his voice was hoarse,
And broken seemed its hollow force,—
'I know the cause, although untold,
Why the king seeks his vassal's hold:
Vainly from me my liege would know
His kingdom's future weal or wo:
But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
His courage may do more than art.

“‘Of middle air the demons proud,
Who ride upon the racking cloud,
Can read, in fixed or wandering star,
The issue of events afar ;
But still their sullen aid withhold
Save when by mightier force controlled.
Such late I summoned to my hall ;
And though so potent was the call,
That scarce the deepest nook of hell
I deemed a refuge from the spell,
Yet, obstinate in silence still,
The haughty demon mocks my skill.
But thou,—who little know’st thy might,
As born upon that blessed night,
When yawning graves, and dying groan,
Proclaimed hell’s empire overthrown,—
With untaught valor shalt compel
Response denied to magic spell.’—
‘Gramercy,’ quoth our monarch free,
‘Place him but front to front with me,
And, by this good and honored brand,
The gift of Cœur-de-Lion’s hand,
Soothly I swear, that, tide what tide,
The demon shall a buffet bide.’—
His bearing bold the wizard viewed,
And thus, well pleased, his speech renewed.—
‘There spoke the blood of Malcom!—mark:
Forth pacing hence, at midnight dark,
The rampart seek, whose circling crown
Crests the ascent of yonder down ;
A southern entrance shalt thou find ;
There halt, and there thy bugle wind.
And trust thine elfin foe to see,
In guise of thy worst enemy.

Couch then thy lance, and spur thy stea —
Upon him! and Saint George to speed!
If he go down, thou soon shalt know
Whate'er these airy sprites can show; —
If thy heart fail thee in the strife,
I am no warrant for thy life.' —

“Soon as the midnight bell did ring,
Alone, and armed, rode forth the king
To that old camp's deserted round: —
Sir Knight, you well might mark the mound,
Left hand the town, — the Pictish race
The trench, long since, in blood did trace;
The moor around is brown and bare,
The space within is green and fair.
The spot our village children know,
For there the earliest wild-flowers grow;
But wo betide the wandering wight,
That treads its circle in the night!
The breadth across, a bowshot clear,
Gives ample space for full career;
Opposed to the four points of heaven,
By four deep gaps is entrance given.
The southermost our monarch past,
Halted, and blew a gallant blast;
And on the north, within the ring,
Appeared the form of England's king;
Who then a thousand leagues afar,
In Palestine waged holy war:
Yet arms like England's did he wield,
Alike the leopards in the shield,
Alike his Syrian courser's frame,
The rider's length of limb the same:

Long afterwards did Scotland know,
Fell Edward was her deadliest foe.

“The vision made our monarch start,
But soon he manned his noble heart,
And in the first career they ran,
The Elfin Knight fell horse and man;
Yet did a splinter of his lance
Through Alexander’s visor glance,
And razed the skin — a puny wound.
The king, light leaping to the ground,
With naked blade his phantom foe
Compelled the future war to show.

Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
Where still gigantic bones remain,
Memorial of the Danish war;
Himself he saw, amid the field,
On high his brandished war-axe wield,
And strike proud Haco from his car,
While, all around the shadowy kings,
Denmark’s grim ravens covered their wings.
’Tis said, that, in that awful night,
Remoter visions met his sight,
Fore-showing future conquests far,
When our sons’ sons wage northern war;
A royal city, tower and spire,
Reddened the midnight sky with fire;
And shouting crews her navy bore,
Triumphant, to the victor shore.
Such signs may learned clerks explain,
They pass the wit of simple swain.

“The joyful king turned home again,
Headed his host, and quelled the Dane:

But yearly, when returned the night
Of his strange combat with the sprite,
His wound must bleed and smart ;
Lord Gifford then would gibing say,
‘Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
The penance of your start.’
Long since, beneath Dunfermline’s nave
King Alexander fills his grave,
Our Lady give him rest !
Yet still the nightly spear and shield
The elfin warrior doth wield,
Upon the brown hill’s breast ;
And many a knight hath proved his chance
In the charmed ring to break a lance,
But all have foully sped ;
Save two, as legends tell, and they
Were Wallace wight, and Gilbert Hay. --
Gentles, my tale is said.” —

The quaighs were deep, the liquor strong,
And on the tale the yeoman throng
Had many a comment sage and long,
But Marmion gave a sign ;
And, with their lord, the squires retire ;
The rest, around the hostel fire,
Their drowsy limbs recline ;
For pillow, underneath each head,
The quiver and the targe were laid ;
Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
Oppressed with toil and ale, they snore ,
The dying flame, in fitful change,
Threw on the group its shadows strange.

Apart, and nestling in the hay
Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay ;
Scarce, by the pale moonlight, were seen
The foldings of his mantle green :
Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
Of sport by thicket, or by stream,
Of hawk or hound, of ring or glove,
Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.

A cautious tread his slumber broke,
And, close beside him, when he woke,
In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
Stood a tall form, with nodding plume :
But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
His master Marmion's voice he knew.

— "Fitz-Eustace! rise,— I cannot rest;
Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
And graver thoughts have chafed my mood ;
The air must cool my feverish blood ;
And fain-would I ride forth, to see
The scene of elfin chivalry.
Arise, and saddle me my steed ;
And gentle Eustace, take good heed
Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves ;
I would not, that the prating knaves
Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
That I could credit such a tale."—
Then softly down the steps they slid,
Eustace the stable door undid,
And, darkling, Marmion's steed arrayed,
While, whispering, thus the Baron said:—

“ Did'st never, good my youth, hear tell,
That in the hour when I was born,
St. George, who graced my sire's chapelle,
Down from his steed of marble fell,
A weary wight forlorn?
The flattering chaplains all agree,
The champion left his steed to me.
I would, the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this Elfin Foe!
Blithe would I battle, for the right
To ask one question at the sprite:—
Vain thought! for elves, if elves there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea,
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their ring.”—
Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
And from the hostel slowly rode.

Fitz-Eustace followed him abroad,
And marked him pace the village road,
And listened to his horse's tramp,
Till, by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.
Wonder it seemed, in the squire's eyes,
That one, so wary held, and wise,—
Of whom 'twas said, he scarce received
For gospel, what the church believed,—
Should, stirred by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Arrayed in plate and mail,
For little did Fitz-Eustace know,
That passions, in contending flow,

Unfix the strongest mind ;
Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,
We welcome fond credulity,
Guide confident, though blind.

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
But, patient, waited till he heard,
At distance, pricked to utmost speed,
The foot-tramp of a flying steed,
Come townward rushing on ;
First, dead, as if on turf it trod,
Then clattering on the village road, —
In other pace than forth he yode,
Returned Lord Marmion.

Down hastily he sprung from selle,
And, in his haste, well nigh he fell ;
To the squire's hand the rein he threw,
And spoke no word as he withdrew ;
But yet the moonlight did betray,
The falcon crest was soiled with clay,
And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
By stains upon the charger's knee,
And his left side, that on the moor
He had not kept his footing sure.
Long musing on these wondrous signs,
At length to rest the squire reclines,
Broken and short ; for still, between,
Would dreams of terror intervene :
Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
The first notes of the morning lark.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FOURTH.

AN ancient minstrel sagely said,
"Where is the life which late we led?"
That motley clown, in Arden wood,
Whom humorous Jaques with envy viewed,
Not even that clown could amplify,
On this trite text, so long as I.
Eleven years we now may tell,
Since we have known each other well;
Since, riding side by side, our hand
First drew the voluntary brand;
And sure, through many a varied scene,
Unkindness never came between.
Away these winged years have flown,
To join the mass of ages gone;
And though deep marked, like all below,
With checkered shades of joy and wo;
Though thou o'er realms and seas hast ranged,
Marked cities lost, and empires changed,
While, here, at home, my narrower ken
Somewhat of manners saw, and men;
Though varying wishes, hopes, and fears,
Fevered the progress of these years,
Yet now, days, weeks, and months, but seem
The recollection of a dream,
So still we glide down to the sea
Of fathomless eternity.

Even now, it scarcely seems a day,
Since first I tuned this idle lay,

A task so often thrown aside,
When leisure graver cares denied,
That now, November's weary gale,
Whose voice inspired my opening tale,
That same November gale once more
Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore ;
Their vexed boughs streaming to the sky,
Once more our naked birches sigh ;
And Blackhouse heights, and Ettricke Pen,
Have donned their wintry shrouds again ;
And mountain dark, and flooded mead,
Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
Earlier than wont along the sky,
Mixed with the rack, the snow-mists fly :
The shepherd, who, in summer sun,
Has something of our envy won,
As thou with pencil, I with pen,
The features traced of hill and glen ;
He who, outstretched, the livelong day,
At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
Viewed the light clouds with vacant look,
Or slumbered o'er his tattered book,
Or idly busied him to guide
His angle o'er the lessened tide : —
At midnight now, the snowy plain
Finds sterner labor for the swain.

When red hath set the beamless sun,
Through heavy vapors dank and dun ;
When the tired ploughman, dry and warm,
Hears, half asleep, the rising storm
Hurling the hail, and sleeted rain,
Against the casement's tinkling pane ;

The sounds that drive wild deer and fox,
To shelter in the brake and rocks,
Are warnings which the shepherd ask
To dismal and to dangerous task.
Oft he looks forth, and hopes, in vain,
The blast may sink in mellowing rain;
Till, dark above, and white below,
Decided drives the flaky snow,
And forth the hardy swain must go.
Long, with dejected look and whine,
To leave the hearth his dogs repine;
Whistling, and cheering them to aid,
Around his back he wreathes the plaid:
His flock he gathers, and he guides
To open downs, and mountain sides,
Where, fiercest though the tempest blow,
Least deeply lies the drift below.
The blast, that whistles o'er the fells,
Stiffens his locks to icicles;
Oft he looks back, while, streaming far,
His cottage window seems a star,
Loses its feeble gleam, and then
Turns patient to the blast again,
And, facing to the tempest's sweep,
Drives through the gloom his lagging sheep:
If fails his heart, if his limbs fail,
Benumbing death is in the gale;
His paths, his landmarks, all unknown,
Close to the hut, no more his own,
Close to the aid he sought in vain,
The morn may find the stiffened swain:
His widow sees, at dawning pale,
His orphans raise their feeble wail;

And, close beside him, in the snow,
 Poor Yarrow, partner of their wō,
 Couches upon his master's breast,
 And licks his cheek, to break his rest.

Who envies now the shepherd's lot,
 His healthy fare, his rural cot,
 His summer couch by greenwood tree,
 His rustic kirk's loud revelry,
 His native hill notes, tuned on high,
 To Marion of the blithesome eye ;
 His crook, his scrip, his oaten reed,
 And all Arcadia's golden creed ?

Changes not so with us, my Skene,
 Of human life the varying scene ?
 Our youthful summer oft we see
 Dance by on wings of game and glee,
 While the dark storm reserves its rage,
 Against the winter of our age ;
 As he, the ancient chief of Troy.
 His manhood spent in peace and joy ;
 But Grecian fires, and loud alarms,
 Called ancient Priam forth to arms.
 Then happy those, — since each must drain
 His share of pleasure, share of pain, —
 Then happy those, beloved of heaven,
 To whom the mingled cup is given ;
 Whose lenient sorrows find relief,
 Whose joys are chastened by their grief.
 And such a lot, my Skene, was thine,
 When thou of late wert doomed to twine, —
 Just when thy bridal hour was by, —
 The cypress with the myrtle tie ;

Just on thy bride her Sire had smiled,
And blessed the union of his child,
When love must change its joyous cheer,
And wipe affection's filial tear.
Nor did the actions, next his end,
Speak more the father than the friend :
Scarce had lamented Forbes paid
The tribute to his Minstrel's shade ;
The tale of friendship scarce was told
Ere the narrator's heart was cold.
Far may we search before we find
A heart so manly and so kind.
But not around his honored urn,
Shall friends alone and kindred mourn ;
The thousand eyes his care had dried,
Pour at his name a bitter tide ;
And frequent falls the grateful dew,
For benefits the world ne'er knew.
If mortal charity dare claim
The Almighty's attributed name,
Inscribed above his mouldering clay,
"The widow's shield, the orphan's stay."
Nor, though it wake thy sorrow, deem
My verse intrudes on this sad theme ;
For sacred was the pen that wrote,
"Thy father's friend forget thou not :"
And grateful title may I plead,
For many a kindly word and deed,
To bring my tribute to his grave : —
'Tis little — but 'tis all I have.

To thee, perchance, this rambling strain
Recalls our summer walks again ;

When doing naught, — and, to speak true,
Not anxious to find aught to do, —
The wild unbounded hills we ranged,
While oft our talk its topic changed,
And desultory, as our way,
Ranged unconfined from grave to gay.
Even when it flagged, as oft will chance,
No effort made to break its trance,
We could right pleasantly pursue
Our sports in social silence too.
Thou gravely laboring to portray
The blighted oak's fantastic spray ;
I spelling o'er, with much delight,
The legend of that antique knight,
Tirante by name, ycleped the White.
At either's feet a trusty squire,
Pandour and Camp, with eyes of fire,
Jealous, each other's motions viewed,
And scarce suppressed their ancient feud.
The laverock whistled from the cloud ;
The stream was lively, but not loud ;
From the white-thorn the May-flower shed
Its dewy fragrance round our head ;
Not Ariel lived more merrily
Under the blossomed bough, than we.

And blithesome nights, too, have been ours,
When Winter stript the summer's bowers ;
Careless we heard, what now I hear,
The wild blast sighing deep and drear,
When fires were bright, and lamps beamed gay,
And ladies tuned the lovely lay ;
And he was held a laggard soul,
Who shunned to quaff the sparkling bowl.

Then he, whose absence we deplore,
Who breathes the gales of Devon's shore,
The longer missed, bewailed the more;
And thou, and I, and dear-loved R——,
And one whose name I may not say,—
For not Mimosa's tender tree
Shrinks sooner from the touch than he,—
In merry chorus well combined,
With laughter drown the whistling wind.
Mirth was within; and Care without
Might gnaw her nails to hear our shout.
Not but amid the buxom scene
Some grave discourse might intervene—
Of the good horse that bore him best,
His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest:
For, like mad Tom's, our chiefest care,
Was horse to ride, and weapon wear.
Such nights we've had; and, though the game
Of manhood be more sober tame,
And though the field-day, or the drill,
Seem less important now—yet still
Such may we hope to share again.
The sprightly thought inspires my strain;
And mark, how like a horseman true,
Lord Marmion's march I thus renew.

CANTO FOURTH.

THE CAMP.

EUSTACE, I said, did blithely mark
The first notes of the merry lark.
The lark sung shrill, the cock he crew,
And loudly Marmion's bugle blew,
And, with their light and lively call,
Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
Whistling they came, and free of heart;
But soon their mood was changed:
Complaint was heard on every part,
Of something disarranged.
Some clamored loud for armor lost;
Some brawled and wrangled with the host;
"By Beckett's bones," cried one, "I fear
That some false Scot has stolen my spear!" —
Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
Found his steed wet with sweat and mire;
Although the rated horse-boy sware,
Last night he dressed him sleek and fair.
While chafed the impatient squire like thunder,
Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder, —
"Help, gentle Blount! help, comrades all!
Bevis lies dying in his stall:
To Marmion who the plight dare tell,
Of the good steed he loves so well?" —
Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
The charger panting on his straw;
Till one, who would seem wisest, cried, —
"What else but evil could betide.
With that cursed Palmer for our guide?"

Better we had through mire and bush
Been lanthorn-led by Friar Rush."

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guessed,
Nor wholly understood,
His comrades' clamorous plaints suppressed ;
He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
And found deep plunged in gloomy thought,
And did his tale display
Simply, as if he knew of naught
To cause such disarray.
Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
Nor marvelled at the wonders told, —
Passed them as accidents of course,
And bade his clarions sound to horse.

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
Had reckoned with their Scottish host ;
And, as the charge he cast and paid,
" Ill thou deserv'st thy hire," he said ;
" Dost see, thou knave, my horse's plight ?
Fairies have ridden him all the night,
And left him in a foam !

I trust, that soon a conjuring band,
With English cross and blazing brand,
Shall drive the devils from this land,
To their infernal home :
For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trampled to and fro." —
The laughing host looked on the hire, —
" Gramercy, gentle southern squire,
And if thou com'st among the rest,
With Scottish broadsword to be blest,

Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
And short the pang to undergo." —
Here stayed their talk, — for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.
The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journeyed all the morning day.

The greensward way was smooth and good,
Through Humble's and through Saltoun's wood;
A forest glade, which, varying still,
Here gave a view of dale and hill;
There narrower closed, till over head
A vaulted screen the branches made,
"A pleasant path," Fitz-Eustace said;
"Such as where errant knights might see
Adventures of high chivalry;
Might meet some damsel flying fast,
With hair unbound, and looks aghast;
And smooth and level course were here,
In her defence to break a spear.
Here, too, are twilight nooks and dells;
And oft, in such, the story tells,
The damsel kind, from danger freed,
Did grateful pay her champion's meed." —
He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion's mind;
Perchance to show his lore designed;
For Eustace much had pored
Upon a huge romantic tome,
In the hall-window of his home,
Imprinted at the antique dome
Of Caxton or De Worde.
Therefore he spoke, — but spoke in vain,
For Marmion answered naught again.

Now sudden distant trumpets shrill,
In notes prolonged by wood and hill,
Were heard to echo far;
Each ready archer grasped his bow,
But by the flourish soon they know
They breathed no point of war.
Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
Lord Marmion's order speeds the band,
Some open ground to gain;
And scarce a furlong had they rode,
When thinner trees, receding, showed
A little woodland plain.
Just in that advantageous glade,
The halting troop a line had made,
As forth from the opposing shade
Issued a gallant train.

First came the trumpets, at whose clang
So late the forest echoes rang;
On prancing steeds they forward pressed,
With scarlet mantle, azure vest;
Each at his trump a banner wore,
Which Scotland's royal scutcheon bore;
Heralds and pursuivants, by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmount, Rothsay, came,
In painted tabards, proudly showing
Gules, Argent, Or, and Azure glowing,
Attendant on a King-at-arms,
Whose hand the armorial truncheon held,
That feudal strife had often quelled,
When wildest its alarms.

He was a man of middle age;
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,

As on king's errand come ;
But in the glances of his eye,
A penetrating, keen, and sly
Expression found its home ;
The flash of that satiric rage,
Which, bursting on the early stage,
Branded the vices of the age,
And broke the keys of Rome.
On milk-white palfrey forth he paced ;
His cap of maintenance was graced
With the proud heron-plume.
From his steed's shoulder, loin, and breast,
Silk housings swept the ground,
With Scotlands arms, device, and crest,
Embroidered round and round.
The double tressure might you see,
First by Achaius borne,
The thistle, and the fleur-de-lis,
And gallant unicorn.
So bright the king's armorial coat,
That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
In living colors, blazoned brave,
The Lion, which his title gave.
A train, which well beseemed his state,
But all unarmed, around him wait.
Still is thy name in high account,
And still thy verse has charms,
Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
Lord Lion King-at-arms !

Down from his horse did Marmion spring,
Soon as he saw the Lion-King ;
For well the stately Baron knew,
To him such courtesy was due,

Whom royal James himself had crowned,
 And on his temples placed the round
 Of Scotland's ancient diadem;
 And wet his brow with hallowed wine,
 And on his finger given to shine
 The emblematic gem.

Their mutual greetings duly made,
 The Lion thus his message said:—
 "Though Scotland's King hath deeply swore,
 Ne'er to knit faith with Henry more,
 And strictly hath forbid resort
 From England to his royal court;
 Yet, for he knows Lord Marmion's name,
 And honors much his warlike fame,
 My liege hath deemed it shame, and lack
 Of courtesy, to turn him back;
 And, by his order, I, your guide,
 Must lodging fit and fair provide,
 Till finds King James meet time to see
 The flower of English chivalry."—

Though inly chafed at this delay,
 Lord Marmion bears it as he may.
 The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
 Beholding thus his place supplied,
 Sought to take leave in vain:
 Strict was the Lion-King's command,
 That none, who rode in Marmion's band,
 Should sever from the train:
 "England has here enow of spies
 In Lady Heron's witching eyes;"
 To Marchmount thus, apart, he said,
 But fair pretext to Marmion made

The right-hand path they now decline,
And trace against the stream the Tyne.

At length up that wild dale they wind,
Where Crichtoun-Castle crowns the bank;
For there the Lion's care assigned
A lodging meet for Marmion's rank.
That Castle rises on the steep
Of the green vale of Tyne;
And far beneath, where slow they creep
From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
Where alders moist, and willows weep,
You hear her streams repine.
The towers in different ages rose;
Their various architecture shows
The builders' various hands;
A mighty mass, that could oppose,
When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
The vengeful Douglas bands.

Crichtoun! though now thy miry court
But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
Thy turrets rude, and tottered Keep,
Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
Oft have I traced within thy fort,
Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
Scutcheons of honor, or pretence,
Quartered in old armorial sort,
Remains of rude magnificence:
Nor wholly yet hath time defaced
Thy lordly gallery fair;
Nor yet the stony cord unbraced,
Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
Adorned thy ruined stair.

Still rises unimpaired, below,
The court-yard's graceful portico ;
Above its cornice, row and row
Of fair hewn facets richly show
 Their pointed diamond form,
Though there but houseless cattle go
 To shield them from the storm.
And, shuddering, still may we explore,
 Where oft whilome were captives pent,
The darkness of thy Massy More ;
 Or, from thy grass-grown battlement,
May trace, in undulating line,
The sluggish mazes of the Tyne

Another aspect Crichtoun showed,
As through its portal Marmion rode ;
But yet 'twas melancholy state
Received him at the outer gate ;
For none were in the castle then,
But women, boys, or aged men.
With eyes scarce dried, the sorrowing dame,
To welcome noble Marmion, came ;
Her son, a stripling twelve years old,
Proffered the Baron's rein to hold ;
For each man, that could draw a sword,
Had marched that morning with their lord,
Earl Adam Hepburn, — he who died
On Flodden, by his sovereign's side.
Long may his Lady look in vain !
She ne'er shall see his gallant train
Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean.
'Twas a brave race, before the name
Of hated Bothwell stained their fame.

And here two days did Marmion rest,
With every rite that honor claims,
Attended as the king's own guest, —
Such the command of royal James ;
Who marshalled then his land's array,
Upon the Borough moor that lay.
Perchance he would not foeman's eye
Upon his gathering host should pry,
Till full prepared was every band
To march against the English land.
Here while they dwelt, did Lindesay's wit
Oft cheer the Baron's moodier fit ;
And, in his turn, he knew to prize
Lord Marmion's powerful mind, and wise, —
Trained in the lore of Rome, and Greece,
And policies of war and peace.

It chanced, as fell the second night,
That on the battlements they walked,
And, by the slowly fading light,
Of varying topics talked ;
And, unaware, the Herald-bard
Said Marmion might his toil have spared,
In travelling so far ;
For that a messenger from heaven
In vain to James had counsel given
Against the English war ;
And, closer questioned, thus he told
A tale, which chronicles of old
In Scottish story have enrolled :

SIR DAVID LINDESAY'S TALE.

“Of all the palaces so fair,
Built for the royal dwelling,
In Scotland, far beyond compare
Linlithgow is excelling;
And in its park, in jovial June,
How sweet the merry linnets tune,
How blithe the blackbird's lay!
The wild buck bells from ferny brake,
The coot dives merry on the lake,
The saddest heart might pleasure take
To see all nature gay.
But June is to our Sovereign dear
The heaviest month in all the year:
Too well his cause of grief you know,—
June saw his father's overthrow.
Wo to the traitor's, who could bring
The princely boy against his King!
Still in his conscience burns the sting.
In offices as strict as Lent,
King James's June is ever spent.

“When last this ruthless month was come,
And in Linlithgow's holy dome
The King, as wont, was praying;
While for his royal father's soul
The chaunter's sung, the bells did toll,
The Bishop mass was saying—
For now the year brought round again
The day the luckless king was slain—

In Katharine's aisle the monarch knelt,
 With sackcloth-shirt, and iron belt,
 And eyes with sorrow streaming;
 Around him, in their stalls of state,
 The Thistle's Knight-Companions sate,
 Their banners o'er them beaming.
 I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
 Bedeafened with the jangling knell,
 Was watching where the sunbeams fell,
 Through the stained casement gleaming;
 But, while I marked what next befell,
 It seemed as I were dreaming.

Stepped from the crowd a ghostly wight,
 In azure gown, with cincture white;
 His forehead bald, his head was bare,
 Down hung at length his yellow hair.—
 Now, mock me not, when, good my Lord,
 I pledge to you my knightly word,
 That, when I saw his placid grace,
 His simple majesty of face,
 His solemn bearing, and his pace
 So stately gliding on,—
 Seemed to me ne'er did limner paint
 So just an image of the Saint,
 Who propped the Virgin in her faint,—
 The loved Apostle John.

“He stepped before the Monarch's chair,
 And stood with rustic plainness there,
 And little reverence made;
 Nor head, nor body, bowed nor bent,
 But on the desk his arm he leant,
 And words like these he said,

In a low voice, — but never tone
 So thrilled through vein, and nerve, and bone .
 ‘My mother sent me from afar,
 Sir King, to warn thee not to war, —
 Who waits on thine array;
 If war thou wilt, of woman fair,
 Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
 James Stuart, doubly warned, beware;
 God keep thee as he may!’ —
 The wondering Monarch seemed to seek
 For answer, and found none;
 And when he raised his head to speak,
 The monitor was gone.
 The Marshal and myself had cast
 To stop him as he outward past;
 But, lighter than the whirlwind’s blast,
 He vanished from our eyes,
 Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
 That glances but, and dies.” —

While Lindesay told this marvel strange,
 The twilight was so pale,
 He marked not Marmion’s color change,
 While listening to the tale:
 But, after a suspended pause,
 The Baron spoke: — “Of Nature’s laws
 So strong I hold the force,
 That never superhuman cause
 Could e’er control their course;
 And, three days since, had judged your aim
 Was but to make your guest your game.
 But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
 What much has changed my skeptic creed,

And made me credit aught." — He staid,
And seemed to wish his words unsaid;
But, by that strong emotion pressed,
Which prompts us to unload our breast,
Even when discovery's pain,
To Lindesay did at length unfold
The tale his village host had told,
At Gifford, to his train.
Naught of the Palmer says he there,
And naught of Constance, or of Clare:
The thoughts, which broke his sleep, he seems
To mention but as feverish dreams.

"In vain," said he, "to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couched my head,
Fantastic thoughts returned;
And, by their wild dominion led,
My heart within me burned.
So sore was the delirious goad,
I took my steed, and forth I rode;
And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
Soon reached the camp upon the wold.
The southern entrance I passed through,
And halted, and my bugle blew.
Methought an answer met my ear, —
Yet was the blast so low and drear,
So hollow, and so faintly blown,
It might be echo of my own.

"Thus judging, for a little space
I listened, ere I left the place;

But scarce could trust my eyes,
Nor yet can think they served me true,
When sudden in the ring I view,
In form distinct of shape and hue,

A mounted champion rise. —
I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
In single fight, and mixed affray,
And ever, I myself may say,
Have borne me as a knight;
But when this unexpected foe
Seemed starting from the gulf below, —
I care not though the truth I show, —
I trembled with affright;
And as I placed in rest my spear,
My hand so shook for very fear,
I scarce could couch it right.

“Why need my tongue the issue tell?
We ran our course, — my charger fell: —
What could he 'gainst the shock of hell? —

I rolled upon the plain.
High o'er my head, with threatening hand,
The spectre shook his naked brand, —

Yet did the worst remain;
My dazzled eyes I upward cast, —
Not opening hell itself could blast

Their sight, like what I saw!
Full on his face the moonbeam strook, —
A face could never be mistook!
I knew the stern vindictive look,
And held my breath for awe.
I saw the face of one who, fled
To foreign climes, has long been dead. —

I well believe the last ;
For ne'er from visor raised, did stare
A human warrior, with a glare
So grimly and so ghastr.
Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade :
But when to good St. George I prayed,
(The first time e'er I asked his aid,)
He plunged it in the sheath ;
And, on his courser mounting light,
He seemed to vanish from my sight :
The moonbeam drooped, and deepest night
Sunk down upon the heath. —
'Twere long to tell what cause I have
To know his face, that met me there,
Called by his hatred from the grave,
To cumber upper air :
Dead or alive, good cause had he
To be my mortal enemy." —

Marvelled Sir David of the Mount ;
Then, learned in story, 'gan recount
Such chance had happed of old,
When once, near Norham, there did fight
A spectre fell, of fiendish might,
In likeness of a Scottish knight,
With Brian Bulmer bold,
And trained him nigh to disallow
The aid of his baptismal vow.
"And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
With Highland broadsword, targe, and plaid,
And fingers red with gore,
Is seen in Rothiemurcus glade,
Or where the sable pine-trees shade
Dark Tomantoul and Achnaslaid,

Dromouchty or Glenmore.
And yet, whate'er such legends say,
Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,
 On mountain, moor, or plain,
Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
True son of chivalry should hold
 These midnight terrors vain;
For seldom have such spirits power
To harm, save in the evil hour,
When guilt we meditate within,
Or harbor unrepented sin."—
Lord Marmion turned him half aside,
And twice to clear his voice he tried,
 Then pressed Sir David's hand,—
But naught, at length, in answer said,
And here their farther converse staid,
 Each ordering that his band
Should bowne them with the rising day,
To Scotland's camp to take their way,—
 Such was the King's command.

Early they took Dun-Edin's road,
And could I trace each step they trode;
Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor stone
Lies on the path to me unknown.
Much might it boast of storied lore;
But, passing such digression o'er,
Suffice it, that their route was laid
Across the furzy hills of Braid.
They passed the glen and scanty rill,
And climbed the opposing bank, until
They gained the top of Blackford Hill.

Blackford! on whose uncultured breast,
Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
Or listed, as I lay at rest,
While rose, on breezes thin,
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
Saint Giles's mingling din.
Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain:
And o'er the landscape as I look,
Naught do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook.
To me they make a heavy moan,
Of early friendships past and gone.

But different far the change has been,
Since Marmion, from the crown
Of Blackford, saw that martial scene
Upon the bent so brown:
Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
Spread all the Borough moor below,
Upland, and dale, and down:—
A thousand did I say? I ween,
Thousands on thousands there was seen,
That checkered all the heath between
The streamlet and the town;
In crossing ranks extending far,
Forming a camp irregular;
Oft giving way, where still there stood
Some relic of the old oak wood,
That, darkly huge, did intervene,
And tamed the glaring white with green:

in these extended lines there lay
A martial kingdom's vast array.

For from Hebudes, dark with rain,
To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
And from the southern Redwire edge,
To farthest Rosse's rocky ledge ;
From west to east, from south to north,
Scotland sent all her warriors forth.
Marmion might hear the mingled hum
Of myriads up the mountain come ;
The horses' tramp, and tingling clank,
Where chiefs reviewed their vassal rank,
 And charger's shrilling neigh ;
And see the shifting lines advance,
While frequent flashed, from shield and lance,
 The sun's reflected ray.

Thin curling in the morning air,
The wreaths of failing smoke declare,
To embers now the brands decayed
Where the night-watch their fires had made,
They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
Full many a baggage-cart and wain,
And dire artillery's clumsy car,
By sluggish oxen tugged to war ;
And there were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,
And culverins which France had given.
Ill-omened gift! the guns remain
The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

Nor marked they less, where in the air
A thousand streamers flaunted fair ;

Various in shape, device, and hue,
Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,
Broad, narrow, swallow-tailed, and square,
Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol, there,
O'er the pavilions flew.

Highest, and midmost, was descried
The royal banner, floating wide;
The staff, a pine-tree strong and straight,
Pitched deeply in a massive stone,
Which still in memory is shown,
Yet bent beneath the standard's weight,
Whene'er the western wind unrolled,
With toil, the huge and cumbrous fold,
And gave to view the dazzling field,
Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
The ruddy Lion ramped in gold.

Lord Marmion viewed the landscape bright, —
He viewed it with a chief's delight, —
Until within him burned his heart,
And lightning from his eye did part,
As on the battle-day;
Such glance did falcon never dart,
When stooping on his prey.
“Oh! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
Thy king from warfare to dissuade
Were but a vain essay;
For, by St. George, were that host mine,
Not power infernal, nor divine,
Should once to peace my soul incline,
Till I had dimmed their armor's shine
In glorious battle fray!” —
Answered the bard, of milder mood:
“Fair is the sight, — and yet 'twere good,

That kings would think withal,
When peace and wealth their land have blessed,
'Tis better to sit still at rest,
Than rise, perchance to fall." —

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stayed,
For fairer scene he ne'er surveyed.

When sated with the martial show
That peopled all the plain below,
The wondering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow

With gloomy splendor red ;

For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
That round her sable turrets flow,

The morning beams were shed,

And tinged them with a lustre proud,

Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.

Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,

Where the huge castle holds its state

And all the steep slope down,

Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,

Piled deep and massy, close and high,

Mine own romantic town !

But northward far, with purer blaze,

On Ochil mountains fell the rays,

And as each heathy top they kissed,

It gleamed a purple amethyst.

Yonder the shores of Fife you saw ;

Here Preston-Bay, and Berwick-Law ;

And, broad between them rolled,

The gallant Firth the eye might note,

Whose islands on its bosom float,

Like emeralds chased in gold.

Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent ;
As if to give his rapture vent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
 And raised his bridle-hand,
And, making demi-volte in air,
Cried, "Where's the coward that would not dare
 To fight for such a land!"
'The Lindesay smiled his joy to see ;
Nor Marmion's frown repressed his glee.

Thus while they looked, a flourish proud,
Where mingled trump, and clarion loud,
 And fife, and kettle-drum,
And sackbut deep, and psaltery
And war-pipe with discordant cry,
And cymbal clattering to the sky,
Making wild music bold and high,
 Did up the mountain come ;
The whilst the bells, with distant chime,
Merrily tolled the hour of prime,
 And thus the Lindesay spoke :—
"Thus clamor still the war-notes when
The King to mass his way has ta'en,
Or to St. Catherine's of Sienne,
 Or chapel of Saint Rocque.
To you they speak of martial fame ;
But me remind of peaceful game,
 When blither was their cheer,
Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
In signal none his steed should spare,
But strive which foremost might repair
 To the downfall of the deer.

“Nor less,” he said, — “when looking forth,
I view yon Empress of the North

Sit on her hilly throne ;
Her palace’s imperial bowers,
Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
Her stately halls, and holy towers —

Nor less,” he said, “I moan,
To think what wo mischance may bring,
And how these merry bells may ring
The death-dirge of our gallant King ;

Or, with their larum, call
The burghers forth to watch and ward,
'Gainst southern sack and fires to guard
Dun-Edin’s leaguered wall. —

But not, for my presaging thought,
Dream conquest sure, or cheaply bought!

Lord Marmion, I say nay ; —
God is the guider of the field,
He breaks the champion’s spear and shield, —

But thou thyself shalt say,
When joins yon host in deadly stowre,
That England’s dames must weep in bower,

Her monks the death-mass sing ;
For never saw’st thou such a power
Led on by such a King.” —

And now, down winding to the plain,
The barriers of the camp they gain,

And there they made a stay. —
There stays the Minstrel, till he fling
His hand o’er every Border string,
And fit his harp the pomp to sing,
Of Scotland’s ancient Court and King,

In the succeeding lay.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIFTH.

WHEN dark December glooms the day,
And takes our autumn joys away ;
When short and scant the sunbeam throws,
Upon the weary waste of snows,
A cold and profitless regard,
Like patron on a needy bard ;
When sylvan occupation's done,
And o'er the chimney rests the gun,
And hang in idle trophy, near,
The game-pouch, fishing-rod and spear ;
When wiry terrier, rough and grim,
And greyhound with his length of limb,
And pointer, now employed no more,
Cumber our parlor's narrow floor ;
When in his stall the impatient steed
Is long condemned to rest and feed ;
When from our snow-encircled home,
Scarce cares the hardiest step to roam.
Since path is none, save that to bring
The needful water from the spring ;
When wrinkled news-page, thrice conned o'er,
Beguiles the dreary hour no more,
And darkling politician, crossed,
Inveighs against the lingering post,
And answering house-wife sore complains
Of carriers' snow-impeded wains :
When such the country cheer, I come,
Well pleased, to seek our city home ;
For converse, and for books, to change
The Forest's melancholy range,

And welcome, with renewed delight,
The busy day, and social night.

Not here need my desponding rhyme
Lament the ravages of time,
As erst by Newark's riven towers,
And Ettricke stripped of forest bowers.
True, — Caledonia's Queen is changed,
Since on her dusky summit ranged,
Within its steepy limits pent,
By bulwark, line, and battlement,
And flanking towers, and laky flood,
Guarded and garrisoned she stood,
Denying entrance or resort,
Save at each tall embattled port;
Above whose arch, suspended, hung
Portcullis spiked with iron prong.
That long is gone, — but not so long,
Since, early closed, and opening late,
Jealous revolved the studded gate:
Whose task from eve to morning tide
A wicket churlishly supplied.
Stern then, and steel-girt was thy brow,
Dun-Edin! O, how altered now,
When safe amid thy mountain court
Thou sitt'st, like Empress at her sport,
And liberal, unconfined, and free,
Flinging thy white arms to the sea,
For thy dark cloud, with umbered lower,
That hung o'er cliff, and lake, and tower,
Thou gleam'st against the western ray
Ten thousand lines of brighter day.

Not she, the championess of old,
In Spenser's magic tale enrolled,—
She for the charmed spear renowned,
Which forced each knight to kiss the ground,—
Not she more changed, when, placed at rest,
What time she was Malbecco's guest,
She gave to flow her maiden vest;
When from the corslet's grasp relieved,
Free to the sight her bosom heaved;
Sweet was her blue eye's modest smile,
Erst hidden by the aventayle;
And down her shoulders graceful rolled
Her locks profuse, of paly gold.
They who whilome, in midnight fight,
Had marvelled at her matchless might,
No less her maiden charms approved,
But looking liked, and liking loved.
The sights could jealous pangs beguile,
And charm Malbecco's cares awhile;
And he, the wandering Squire of Dames,
Forgot his Columbella's claims,
And passion, erst unknown, could gain
The breast of blunt Sir Satyrane;
Nor durst light Paridel advance,
Bold as he was, a looser glance,—
She charmed, at once, and tamed the heart,
Incomparable Britomarte!

So thou, fair City! disarrayed
Of battled wall and rampart's aid,
As stately seem'st, but lovelier far
Than in that panoply of war

Nor deem that from thy fenceless throne
Strength and security are flown;
Still, as of yore, Queen of the North!
Still canst thou send thy children forth.
Ne'er readier at alarm-bell's call
Thy burghers rose to man thy wall,
Than now, in danger, shall be thine,
Thy dauntless voluntary line;
For fosse and turret proud to stand,
Their breasts the bulwark of the land.
Thy thousands, trained to martial toil,
Full red would stain their native soil,
Ere from thy mural crown there fell
The slightest knosp or pinnacle.
And if it come, — as come it may, —
Dun-Edin! that eventful day, —
Renowned for hospitable deed,
That virtue much with heaven may plead,
In patriarchal times whose care
Descending angels deigned to share;
That claim may wrestle blessings down
On those who fight for the Good Town,
Destined in every age to be
Refuge of injured royalty;
Since first, when conquering York arose,
To Henry meek she gave repose,
Till late, with wonder, grief, and awe,
Great Bourbon's relics, sad she saw.

Truce to these thoughts! — for, as they rise,
How gladly I avert mine eyes,
Bodings, or true or false, to change,
For Fiction's fair romantic range,

Or for Tradition's dubious light,
That hovers 'twixt the day and night:
Dazzling alternately and dim,
Her wavering lamp I'd rather trim,
Knights, squires, and lovely dames to see,
Creation of my fantasy,
Than gaze abroad on reeky fen,
And make of mists invading men. —
Who loves not more the night of June
Than dull December's gloomy noon?
The moonlight than the fog of frost?
And can we say, which cheats the most?

But who shall teach my harp to gain
A sound of the romantic strain,
Whose Anglo-Norman tone whilere
Could win the Second Henry's ear,
Famed Beauclerc called, for that he loved
The minstrel, and his lay approved?
Who shall these lingering notes redeem,
Decaying on Oblivion's stream;
Such notes as from the Breton tongue
Marie translated, Blondel sung? —
O! born Time's ravage to repair,
And make thy dying Muse thy care;
Who when his scythe her hoary foe
Was poisoning for the final blow,
The weapon from his hand could wring,
And break his glass, and shear his wing,
And bid, reviving in his strain,
The gentle poet live again;
Thou, who canst give to lightest lay
An unpedantic moral gay,

Nor less the dullest theme bid fit
On wings of unexpected wit ;
In letters as in life approved,
Example honòred, and beloved, —
Dear ELLIS ! to the bard impart
A lesson of thy magic art,
To win at once the head and heart, —
At once to charm, instruct, and mend,
My guide, my pattern, and my friend !

Such minstrel lesson to bestow
Be long thy pleasing task, — but, O !
No more by thy example teach
What few can practice, all can preach ;
With even patience to endure
Lingering disease, and painful cure,
And boast affliction's pangs subdued
By mild and manly fortitude.
Enough, the lesson has been given :
Forbid the repetition, Heaven !

Come, listen, then ! for thou hast known,
And loved, the Minstrel's varying tone ;
Who, like his Border sires of old,
Waked a wild measure, rude and bold,
Till Windsor's oaks, and Ascot plain,
With wonder heard the northern strain.
Come, listen ! — bold in thy applause,
The Bard shall scorn pedantic laws ;
And, as the ancient art could stain
Achievements on the storied pane,
Irregularly traced and planned,
But yet so glowing and so grand ;

So shall he strive, in changeful hue
Field, feast, and combat, to renew,
And loves, and arms, and harpers' glee,
And all the pomp of chivalry.



CANTO FIFTH.

THE COURT.

THE train has left the hills of Braid ;
The barrier guard have open made,
(So Lindesay bade,) the palisade,
That closed the tented ground,
Their men the warders backward drew,
And carried pikes as they rode through,
Into its ample bound.
Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
Upon the Southern band to stare ;
And envy with their wonder rose,
To see such well-appointed foes ;
Such lengths of shafts, such mighty bows,
So huge, that many simple thought,
But for a vaunt such weapons wrought ;
And little deemed their force to feel,
Through links of mail, and plates of steel,

When, rattling upon Flodden vale,
The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.

Nor less did Marmion's skillful view
Glance every line and squadron through;
And much he marvelled one small land
Could marshal forth such various band:

For men-at-arms were here,
Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
Like iron towers for strength and weight,
On Flemish steeds of bone and height,

With battle-axe and spear.

Young knights and squires, a lighter train,
Practiced their chargers on the plain,
By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,

Each warlike feat to show;

To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,
And high curvett, that not in vain
The sword-sway might descend amain

On foeman's casque below.

He saw the hardy burghers there
March armed, on foot, with faces bare,

For visor they wore none,

Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight;
But burnished were their corslets bright,
Their brigantines, and gorgets light,

Like very silver shone.

Long pikes they had for standing fight,

Two-handed swords they wore,

And many wielded mace of weight,

And bucklers bright they bore.

On foot the yeoman too, but dressed

In his steel jack, a swarthy vest,

With iron quilted well ;
Each at his back (a slender store)
His forty days' provision bore,
As feudal statutes tell.
His arms were halbard, axe, or spear,
A cross-bow there, a hagbut here,
A dagger-knife, and brand. —
Sober he seemed, and sad of cheer,
As loth to leave his cottage dear,
And march to foreign strand ;
Or musing who could guide his steer,
To till the fallow land.
Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye
Did aught of dastard terror lie ;—
More dreadful far his ire,
Than theirs, who, scorning danger's name,
In eager mood to battle came,
Their valor like light straw on flame,
A fierce but fading fire.

Not so the Borderer :— bred to war,
He knew the battle's din afar,
And joyed to hear it swell.
His peaceful day was slothful ease,
Nor harp, nor pipe, his ear could please,
Like the loud slogan yell.
On active steed, with lance and blade,
The light-armed pricker plied his trade,—
Let nobles fight for fame ;
Let vassals follow where they lead,
Burghers, to guard their townships, bleed,
But war's the Borderers' game.

Their gain, their glory, their delight,
 To sleep the day, maraud the night,
 O'er mountain, moss, and moor;
 Joyful to fight they took their way,
 Scarce caring who might win the day,
 Their booty was secure.

These, as Lord Marmion's train passed by,
 Looked on at first with careless eye,
 Nor marvelled aught, well taught to know
 The form and force of English bow.
 But when they saw the Lord arrayed
 In splendid arms, and rich brocade.
 Each Borderer to his kinsman said, —

“Hist, Ringan! seest thou there!
 Canst guess which road they'll homeward ride?
 O! could we but on Border side,
 By Eusdale glen, or Liddell's tide,
 Beset a prize so fair!
 That fangless Lion, too, their guide,
 Might chance to lose his glistering hide;
 Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied,
 Could make a kirtle rare.”

Next Marmion marked the Celtic race,
 Of different language, form, and face,
 A various race of man;
 Just then the chiefs their tribes arrayed,
 And wild and garish semblance made,
 The checkered trews, and belted plaid,
 And varying notes the war-pipes brayed
 To every varying clan;
 Wild through their red or sable hair
 Looked out their eyes, with savage stare,

On Marmion as he passed ;
Their legs above the knee were bare ;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
And hardened to the blast ;
Of taller race, the chiefs they own
Were by the eagle's plumage known.
The hunted red-deer's undressed hide
Their hairy buskins well supplied ;
The graceful bonnet decked their head ;
Back from the shoulders hung the plaid ;
A broadsword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and strength,
A studded targe they wore,
And quivers, bows, and shafts, — but, O !
Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,
To that which England bore.
The Isles-men carried at their backs,
The ancient Danish battle-axe.
They raised a wild and wondering cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.
Loud were their clamoring tongues, as when
The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
And, with their cries discordant mixed,
Grumbled and yelled the pipes betwixt.

Thus through the Scottish camp they passed,
And reached the City gate at last,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Armed burghers kept their watch and ward.
Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamped, in field so near,
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
As through the bustling streets they go,
All was alive with martial show ;

At every turn, with dinning clang,
The armorer's anvil clashed and rang;
Or toiled the swarthy smith, to wheel
The bar that arms the charger's heel;
Or axe, or falchion, to the side
Of jarring grindstone was applied.
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace,
Through street, and lane, and market-place,
Bore lance, or casque, or sword;
While burghers, with important face,
Described each new-come lord,
Discussed his lineage, told his name,
His following, and his warlike fame.—
The Lion led to lodging meet,
Which high o'erlooked the crowded street;
There must the Baron rest,
Till past the hour of vesper tide,
And then to Holy-Rood must ride,—
Such was the King's behest.
Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
A banquet rich, and costly wines,
To Marmion and his train.
And when the appointed hour succeeds,
The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,
And following Lindesay as he leads,
The palace-halls they gain.

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily,
That night, with wassail, mirth, and glee.
King James within her princely bower
Feasted the chiefs of Scotland's power,
Summoned to spend the parting hour;

For he had charged, that his array
Should southward march by break of day.
Well loved that splendid monarch aye
The banquet and the song,
By day the tourney, and by night
The merry dance, traced fast and light,
The maskers quaint, the pageant bright,
The revel loud and long.
This feast outshone his banquets past;
It was his blithest, — and his last.
The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,
Cast on the court a dancing ray;
Here to the harp did minstrels sing;
There ladies touched a softer string;
With long-eared cap, and motley vest,
The licensed fool retailed his jest;
His magic tricks the juggler plied;
At dice and draughts the gallants vied;
While some, in close recess apart,
Courted the ladies of their heart,
Nor courted them in vain:
For often, in the parting hour,
Victorious love asserts his power
O'er coldness and disdain;
And flinty is her heart, can view
To battle march a lover true, —
Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,
Nor own her share of pain.

Through this mixed crowd of glee and game,
The King to greet Lord Marmion came,
While, reverend, all made room.

And easy task it was, I trow,
King James's manly form to know,
Although, his courtesy to show,
He doffed, to Marmion bending low,
 His broidered cap and plume.
For royal were his garb and mien,
 His cloak, of crimson velvet piled,
 Trimmed with the fur of martin wild ;
His vest, of changeful satin sheen,
 The dazzled eye beguiled ;
His gorgeous collar hung adown,
Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown,
The thistle brave, of old renown ;
His trusty blade, Toledo right,
Descended from a baldrick bright ;
White were his buskins, on the heel
His spurs inlaid of gold and steel ;
His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
Was buttoned with a ruby rare :
And Marmion deemed he ne'er had seen
A prince of such a noble mien.

The monarch's form was middle size ;
For feat of strength, or exercise,
 Shaped in proportion fair ;
And hazel was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye,
 His short curled beard and hair.
Light was his footstep in the dance,
And firm his stirrup in the lists ;
And, oh ! he had that merry glance
 That seldom lady's heart resists.
Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
And loved to plead, lament, and sue ;—

Suit lightly won, and short-lived pain!
For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.

I said he joyed in banquet-bower;
But, mid his mirth, 'twas often strange,
How suddenly his cheer would change,

His look o'ercast and lower,
If, in a sudden turn, he felt
The pressure of his iron belt,
That bound his breast in penance-pain,
In memory of his father slain.

Even so 'twas strange how, evermore,
Soon as the passing pang was o'er,
Forward he rushed, with double glee,
Into the stream of revelry:

Thus, dim-seen object of affright
Startles the courser in his flight,
And half he halts, half springs aside;
But feels the quickening spur applied,
And, straining on the tightened rein,
Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway:

To Scotland's court she came,
To be a hostage for her lord,
Who Cessford's gallant heart had gored,
And with the King to make accord,

Had sent his lovely dame.
Nor to that lady free alone
Did the gay King allegiance own;

For the fair Queen of France
Sent him a Turquoise ring, and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and love

For her to break a lance ;
 And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
 And march three miles on southern land,
 And bid the banners of his band
 In English breezes dance.
 And thus for France's Queen, he drest
 His manly limbs in mailed vest ;
 And thus admitted English fair,
 His inmost counsels still to share ;
 And thus, for both, he madly planned
 The ruin of himself and land !
 And yet, the sooth to tell,
 Nor England's fair, nor France's Queen,
 Were worth one pearl-drop, bright and sheen,
 From Margaret's eyes that fell, —
 His own Queen Margaret, who, in Lithgow's
 bower,
 All lonely sat, and wept the weary hour.

The Queen sits low in Lithgow pile,
 And weeps the weary day,
 The war against her native soil,
 Her Monarch's risk in battle broil : —
 And in gay Holy-Rood, the while,
 Dame Heron rises, with a smile,
 Upon the harp to play.
 Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
 The strings her fingers flew ;
 And as she touched and tuned them all,
 Even her bosom's rise and fall
 Was plainer given to view ;
 For, all for heat, was laid aside
 Her wimple, and her hood untied.

And first she pitched her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the King,
And then around the silent ring;
And laughed, and blushed, and oft did say
Her pretty oath, by Yea, and Nay,
She could not, would not, durst not play!
At length, upon the harp, with glee,
Mingled with arch simplicity,
A soft, yet lively, air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung.

LOCHINVAR.

LADY HERON'S SONG.

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best,
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none;
He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He staid not for brake, and he stopped not for stone.
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;
But, ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,)

“O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?” —

“I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied; —
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide —
And now I am come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar.”

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar, —
“Now tread we a measure!” said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and
plume;
And the bride-maidens whispered, “’Twere better by far
To have matched our fair cousin with young Loch-
invar.”

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall door and the charger
stood near:
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
“She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur:
They’ll have fleet steeds that follow,” quoth young
Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby
clan ;

Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they
ran ;

There was racing, and chasing, on Cannoble Lee,

But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.

So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,

Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar ?

The Monarch o'er the syren hung,

And beat the measure as she sung ;

And, pressing closer, and more near,

He whispered praises in her ear.

In loud applause the courtiers vied ;

And ladies winked, and spoke aside.

The witching dame to Marmion threw

A glance, where seemed to reign

The pride that claims applauses due,

And of her royal conquest, too,

A real or feigned disdain :

Familiar was the look, and told,

Marmion and she were friends of old.

The King observed their meeting eyes,

With something like displeas'd surprise ;

For monarchs ill can rivals brook,

Even in a word, or smile, or look.

Straight took he forth the parchment broad,

Which Marmion's high commission showed :

" Our Borders sacked by many a raid,

Our peaceful liege-men robbed," he said ;

" On day of truce our Warden slain,

Stout Barton killed, his vessels ta'en —

Unworthy were we here to reign,
Should these for vengeance cry in vain ;
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
Our herald has to Henry borne."—

He paused, and led where Douglas stood,
And with stern eye the pageant viewed :
I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,
Who coronet of Angus bore,
And, when his blood and heart were high,
Did the third James in camp defy,
And all his minion's led to die

On Lauder's dreary flat :

Princes and favorites long grew tame,
And trembled at the homely name

Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat.

The same who left the dusky vale
Of Hermitage in Liddisdale,

Its dungeons, and its towers,

Where Bothwell's turrets brave the air,
And Bothwell bank is blooming fair,

To fix his princely bowers.

Though now, in age, he had laid down
His armor for the peaceful gown,

And for a staff his brand,

Yet often would flash forth the fire,
That could, in youth, a monarch's ire

And minion's pride withstand ;

And even that day, at council board,

Unapt to sooth his sovereign's mood,

Against the war had Angus stood,

And chafed his royal Lord.

His giant-form, like ruined tower,
Though fallen its muscles' brawny vaunt,
Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,

Seemed o'er the gaudy scene to lower :
His locks and beard in silver grew ;
His eye-brows keep their sable hue.

Near Douglas when the Monarch stood,
His bitter speech he thus pursued :—

“Lord Marmion, since these letters say
That in the North you needs must stay,

While slightest hopes of peace remain,
Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,
To say — Return to Lindisfarn,

Until my herald come again. —

Then rest you in Tantallon Hold ;
Your host shall be the Douglas bold, —
A chief unlike his sires of old.

He wears their motto on his blade,
Their blazon o'er his towers displayed ;
Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,
More than to face his country's foes.

And, I bethink me, by Saint Stephen,

But e'en this morn to me was given
A prize, the first-fruits of the war,
Ta'en from a galley from Dunbar,

A bevy of the maids of heaven.
Under your guard, these holy maids
Shall safe return to cloister shades,
And, while they at Tantallon stay,
Requiem for Cochran's soul may say.” —
And, with the slaughtered favorite's name,
Across the Monarch's brow there came
A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.

In answer naught could Angus speak ;
 His proud heart swelled well nigh to break ;
 He turned aside, and down his cheek

A burning tear there stole.

His hand the Monarch sudden took,
 That sight his kind heart could not brook :

“ Now, by the Bruce’s soul,
 Angus, my hasty speech forgive !
 For sure as doth his spirit live,
 As he said of the Douglas old,

I well may say of you, —
 That never king did subject hold,
 In speech more free, in war more bold,
 More tender, and more true ;
 Forgive me, Douglas, once again.” —
 And, while the King his hand did strain,
 The old man’s tears fell down like rain.
 To seize the moment Marmion tried,
 And whispered to the King aside : —
 “ Oh ! let such tears unwonted plead
 For respite short from dubious deed !
 A child will weep at bramble’s smart,
 A maid to see her sparrow part,
 A stripling for a woman’s heart :
 But wo awaits a country, when
 She sees the tears of bearded men.
 Then, oh ! what omen, dark and high,
 When Douglas wets his manly eye ! ” —

Displeased was James, that stranger viewed
 And tampered with his changing mood.
 “ Laugh those that can, weep those that may,”
 Thus did the fiery Monarch say,
 “ Southward I march by break of day ;

And if within Tantallon strong,
The good Lord Marmion tarrics long,
Perchance our meeting next may fall
At Tamworth, in his castle-hall." —
The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
And answered, grave, the royal vaunt ;
" Much honored were my humble home,
If in its halls King James should come ;
But Nottingham has archers good,
And Yorkshire men are stern of mood ;
Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
On Derby's hills the paths are steep ;
In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep ;
And many a banner will be torn,
And many a knight to earth be borne,
And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent :
Yet pause, brave prince, while yet you may." —
The Monarch lightly turned away,
And to his nobles loud did call, —
" Lords, to the dance, — a hall ! a hall !"
Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
And led Dame Heron gallantly ;
And minstrels, at the royal order,
Rung out, — " Blue Bonnets o'er the Border."

Leave we these revels now, to tell
What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
Whose galley, as they sailed again
To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
Now at Dun-Edin did they bide,
Till James should of their fate decide ;

And soon, by his command,
Were gently summoned to prepare
To journey under Marmion's care,
As escort honored, safe, and fair,
Again to English land.
The Abbess told her chaplet o'er,
Nor knew which Saint she should implore;
For when she thought of Constance, sore
She feared Lord Marmion's mood.
And judge what Clara must have felt!
The sword, that hung in Marmion's belt,
Had drunk De Wilton's blood.
Unwittingly, King James had given,
As guard to Whithy's shades,
The man most dreaded under heaven
By these defenceless maids;
Yet what petition could avail,
Or who would listen to the tale
Of woman, prisoner and nun,
Mid bustle of a war begun?
They deemed it hopeless to avoid
The convoy of their dangerous guide.

Their lodging, so the King assigned,
To Marmion's, as their guardian, joined;
And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,
The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
Who warned him by a scroll,
She had a secret to reveal,
That much concerned the Church's weal,
And health of sinners' soul;
And, with deep charge of secrecy,

She named a place to meet,
Within an open balcony,
That hung from dizzy pitch, and high,
Above the stately street ;
To which, as common to each home,
At night they might in secret come.

At night in secret there they came,
The Palmer and the holy dame.
The moon among the clouds rode high,
And all the city hum was by.

Upon the street, where late before
Did din of war and warriors roar,
You might have heard a pebble fall,
A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
An owlet flap his boding wing
On Giles's steeple tall.

The antique buildings, climbing high,
Whose Gothic frontlets sought the sky,
Were here wrapped deep in shade ;
There, on their brows the moon-beam broke,
Through the faint wreaths of silvery smoke,
And on the casement played.

And other light was none to see,
Save torches gliding far,
Before some chieftain of degree,
Who left the royal revelry

To bowne him for the war. —
A solemn scene the Abbess chose ;
A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

“O, holy Palmer!” she began, —
“For sure he must be sainted man,

Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
Where the Redeemer's tomb is found;—
For his dear Church's sake, my tale
Attend, nor deem of light avail,
Though I must speak of worldly love,—
How vain to those who wed above!—
De Wilton and Lord Marmion wooed
Clara de Clare, of Gloster's blood;
(Idle it were of Whitby's dame,
To say of that same blood I came;)
And once, when jealous rage was high,
Lord Marmion said despitiously,
Wilton was traitor in his heart,
And had made league with Martin Swart,
When he came here on Simnel's part;
And only cowardice did restrain
His rebel aid on Stokefield's plain,—
And down he threw his glove:—the thing
Was tried, as wont, before the King;
Where frankly did De Wilton own,
That Swart in Guelders he had known;
And that between them then there went
Some scroll of courteous compliment.
For this he to his castle sent;
But when his messenger returned,
Judge how De Wilton's fury burned;
For in his packet there were laid
Letters that claimed disloyal aid,
And proved King Henry's cause betrayed.
His fame, thus blighted, in the field
He strove to clear, by spear and shield;—
To clear his fame in vain he strove,
For wondrous are His ways above!

Perchance some form was unobserved ;
Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved :
Else how could guiltless champion quail,
Or how the blessed ordeal fail ?

“ His squire, who now De Wilton saw
As recreant doomed to suffer law,
Repentant, owned in vain,
That, while he had the scrolls in care,
A stranger maiden, passing fair,
Had drenched him with a beverage rare ;—

His words no faith could gain.
With Clare alone he credence won,
Who, rather than wed Marmion,
Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
To give our house her livings fair,
And die a vestal votress there.
The impulse from the earth was given,
But bent her to the paths of heaven.
A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
Ne'er sheltered her in Whitby's shade,
No, not since Saxon Edelfled ;

Only one trace of earthly strain,
That for her lover's loss
She cherishes a sorrow vain,
And murmurs at the cross. —
And then her heritage ; — it goes
Along the banks of Tame ;
Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,
In meadows rich the heifer lows,
The falconer, and huntsman, knows
Its woodlands for the game.
Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
And I, her humble votress here,

Should do a deadly sin,
 Her temple spoiled before mine eyes,
 If this false Marmion such a prize
 By my consent should win ;
 Yet hath our boisterous Monarch sworn,
 That Clare shall from our house be torn,
 And grievous cause have I to fear,
 Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.

“ Now, prisoner, helpless, and betrayed
 To evil power, I claim thine aid,
 By every step that thou hast trod
 To holy shrine, and grotto dim ;
 By every martyr's tortured limb ;
 By angel, saint, and seraphim,
 And by the church of God !
 For mark : — When Wilton was betrayed,
 And with his squire forged letters laid,
 She was, alas ! that sinful maid,

By whom the deed was done, —
 O ! shame and horror to be said ! —

She was a perjured nun :
 No clerk in all the land, like her,
 Traced quaint and varying character.

Perchance you may a marvel deem,
 That Marmion's paramour,
 (For such vile thing she was,) should scheme

Her lover's nuptial hour ;
 But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
 As privy to his honor's stain,
 Illimitable power :

For this she secretly retained
 Each proof that might the plot reveal,
 Instructions with his hand and seal ;

And thus Saint Hilda deigned,
Through sinner's perfidy impure
Her house's glory to secure,
And Clare's immortal weal.

"'Twere long, and needless, here to tell,
How to my hand these papers fell;
With me they must not stay.
Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true!
Who knows what outrage he might do,
While journeying by the way?—
O! blessed Saint, if e'er again
I venturous leave thy calm domain,
To travel or by land or main,
Deep penance may I pay!—
Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:
I give this packet to thy care,
For thee to stop they will not dare;
And, O! with cautious speed,
To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
That he may show them to the King;
And for thy well-earned need,
Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine,
A weekly mass shall still be thine,
While priests can sing and read.—
What ail'st thou?—Speak!"—For as he took
The charge, a strong emotion shook
His frame; and, ere reply,
They heard a faint, yet shrilly tone,
Like distant clarion feebly blown,
That on the breeze did die;
And loud the Abbess shrieked in fear,
"Saint Withold save us!—What is here!"

Look at yon City Cross!
 See on its battled tower appear
 Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear,
 And blazoned banners toss!" —

Dun-Edin's Cross, a pillared stone,
 Rose on a turret octagon;
 (But now is razed that monument,
 Whence royal edict rang.
 And voice of Scotland's law was sent,
 In glorious trumpet clang.
 O! be his tomb as lead to lead,
 Upon his dull destroyer's head!
 A minstrel's malison is said. —)
 Then on its battlements they saw
 A vision, passing Nature's law,
 Strange, wild, and dimly seen;
 Figures, that seemed to rise and die,
 Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
 While naught confirmed could ear or eye
 Discern of sound or mien.
 Yet darkly did it seem, as there
 Heralds and Pursuivants prepare,
 With trumpet sound, and blazon fair,
 A summons to proclaim;
 But indistinct the pageant proud,
 As fancy forms of midnight cloud,
 When flings the moon upon her shroud
 A wavering tinge of flame;
 It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
 From midmost of the spectre crowd,
 This awful summons came: —

“ Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer,
 Whose names I now shall call,
 Scottish, or foreigner, give ear!
 Subjects of him who sent me here,
 At his tribunal to appear,

I summon one and all:
 I cite you by each deadly sin,
 That e'er hath soiled your hearts within;
 I cite you by each brutal lust,
 That e'er defiled your earthly dust, —

By wrath, by pride, by fear,
 By each o'ermastering passion's tone,
 By the dark grave, and dying groan!
 When forty days are past and gone,
 I cite you, at your Monarch's throne,
 To answer and appear.” —

Then thundered forth a roll of names: —
 The first was thine, unhappy James!

Then all thy nobles came;
 Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
 Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle, —
 Why should I tell their separate style?

Each chief of birth and fame,
 Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
 Fore-doomed to Flodden's carnage pile,

Was cited there by name;
 And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
 Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbay,
 De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
 The self-same thundering voice did say. —

But then another spoke:
 “ Thy fatal summons I deny,
 And thine infernal lord defy,
 Appealing me to Him on High,

Who burst the sinner's yoke."—
 At that dread accent, with a scream,
 Parted the pageant like a dream,
 The summoner was gone.
 Prone on her face the Abbess fell,
 And fast, and fast, her beads did tell;
 Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
 And found her there alone.
 She marked not, at the scene aghast,
 What time, or how, the Palmer passed.

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth move.

Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
 Save when, for weal of those they love,
 To pray the prayer, and vow the vow,
 The tottering child, the anxious fair,
 The grey-haired sire, with pious care,
 To chapels and to shrines repair.—
 Where is the Palmer now? and where
 The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare?—
 Bold Douglas! to Tantallon fair
 They journey in thy charge:
 Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,
 The Palmer still was with the band;
 Angus, like Lindesay, did command,
 That none should roam at large.
 But in that Palmer's altered mien
 A wondrous change might now be seen;
 Freely he spoke of war,
 Of marvels wrought by single hand,
 When lifted for a native land;
 And still looked high, as if he planned
 Some desperate deed afar.

His courser would he feed, and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frocke,
Would first his mettle bold provoke,
Then sooth, or quell his pride.
Old Herbert said, that never one
He saw, except Lord Marmion,
A steed so fairly ride.

Some half-hour's march behind, there came
By Eustace governed fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,
With all her nuns, and Clare.
No audience had Lord Marmion sought;
Ever he feared to aggravate
Clara de Clare's suspicious hate;
And safer 'twas, he thought,
To wait till, from the nuns removed,
The influence of kinsmen loved,
And suit by Henry's self approved,
Her slow consent had wrought.
His was no flickering flame, that dies
Unless when fanned by looks and sighs,
And lighted oft at lady's eyes;
He longed to stretch his wide command
O'er luckless Clara's ample land:
Besides, when Wilton with him vied,
Although the pang of humble pride
The place of jealousy supplied,
Yet conquest, by that meanness won
He almost loathed to think upon,
Led him, at times, to hate the cause,
Which made him burst through honor's laws.
If e'er he loved, 'twas her alone,
Who died within that vault of stone.

And now, when close at hand they saw
North-Berwick's town and lofty Law,
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause a while,
Before a venerable pile,

Whose turrets viewed, afar,
The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,
The ocean's peace or war.
At tolling of a bell, forth came
The convent's venerable Dame,
And prayed Saint Hilda's Abbess rest
With her, a loved and honored guest,
Till Douglas should a bark prepare
To waft her back to Whitby fair.

Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,
And thanked the Scottish Prioress ;
And tedious were to tell, I ween,
The courteous speech that passed between.

O'erjoyed the nuns their palfreys leave :

But when fair Clara did intend,

Like them, from horseback to descend,

Fitz-Eustace said, — " I grieve,
Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
Such gentle company to part. —

Think not discourtesy,

But Lords' commands must be obeyed ;
And Marmion and the Douglas said,

That you must wend with me.

Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
Which to the Scottish Earl he showed,
Commanding, that beneath his care,
Without delay, you should repair,
To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Claire." —

The startled Abbess loud exclaimed;
But she, at whom the blow was aimed,
Grew pale as death, and cold as lead, —
She deemed she heard her death-doom read.
“Cheer thee, my child!” the Abbess said,
“They dare not tear thee from my hand,
To ride alone with armed band.” —

“Nay, holy mother, nay,”
Fitz-Eustace said, “the lovely Clare
Will be in Lady Angus’ care,
In Scotland while we stay;
And, when we move, an easy ride
Will bring us to the English side,
Female attendance to provide
Befitting Gloster’s heir;
Nor thinks, nor dreams, my noble lord,
By slightest look, or act, or word,
To harass Lady Clare.
Her faithful guardian he will be,
Nor sue for slightest courtesy
That e’en to stranger falls,
Till he shall place her, safe and free,
Within her kinsman’s halls.” —
He spoke, and blushed with earnest grace;
His faith was painted on his face,
And Clare’s worst fear relieved.
The Lady Abbess loud exclaimed
On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,
Entreated, threatened, grieved;
To martyr, saint, and prophet prayed,
Against Lord Marmion inveighed,
And called the Prioress to aid,
To curse with candle, bell, and book, —
Her head the grave Cistercian shook:

“The Douglas, and the King,” she said,
 “In their commands will be obeyed;
 Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall
 To maiden in Tantallon hall.” —

The Abbess, seeing strife was vain,
 Assumed her wonted state again, —
 For much of state she had, —
 Composed her veil, and raised her head,
 And — “Bid,” in solemn voice she said,
 “Thy master, bold and bad,
 The records of his house turn o’er,
 And, when he shall there written see,
 That one of his own ancestry
 Drove the Monks forth of Coventry,
 Bid him his fate explore!
 Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
 His charger hurled him to the dust,
 And, by a base plebeian thrust,
 He died his band before.
 God judge ’twixt Marmion and me:
 He is a chief of high degree,
 And I a poor recluse;
 Yet oft, in holy writ, we see
 Even such weak minister as me
 May the oppressor bruise:
 For thus, inspired, did Judith slay
 The mighty in his sin,
 And Jael thus, and Deborah,” —
 Here hasty Blount broke in:
 “Fitz-Eustace, we must march our band;
 St. Anton fire thee! wilt thou stand
 All day, with bonnet in thy hand,

To hear the Lady preach?
 By this good light! if thus we stay,
 Lord Marmion, for our fond delay,
 Will sharper sermon teach.
 Come, don thy cap, and mount thy horse;
 The Dame must patience take perforce." —

"Submit we then to force," said Clare;
 "But let this barbarous lord despair
 His purposed aim to win;
 Let him take living, land and life;
 But to be Marmion's wedded wife
 In me were deadly sin:
 And if it be the King's decree,
 That I must find no sanctuary,
 Where even a homicide might come,
 And safely rest his head,
 Though at its open portals stood,
 Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood,
 The kinsmen of the dead;
 Yet one asylum is my own,
 Against the dreaded hour;
 A low, a silent, and a lone,
 Where kings have little power.
 One victim is before me there. —
 Mother, your blessing, and in prayer
 Remember your unhappy Clare!" —
 Loud weeps the Abbess, and bestows
 Kind blessings many a one;
 Weeping and wailing loud arose
 Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes
 Of every simple nun.
 His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
 And scarce rude Blount the sight could bide.

Then took the squire her rein,
And gently led away her steed,
And, by each courteous word and deed,
To cheer her strove in vain.

But scant three miles the band had rode,
When o'er a height they passed,
And, sudden, close before them showed
His towers, Tantallon vast:
Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
And held impregnable in war.
On a projecting rock they rose,
And round three sides the ocean flows;
The fourth did battled walls enclose,
And double mound and fosse.
By narrow draw-bridge, outworks strong,
Through studded gates, an entrance long,
To the main court they cross.
It was a wide and stately square;
Around were lodgings, fit and fair,
And towers of various form.
Which on the court projected far,
And broke its lines quadrangular.
Here was square keep, there turret high,
Or pinnacle that sought the sky,
Whence oft the Warder could descry
The gathering ocean-storm.

Here did they rest. — The princely care
Of Douglas, why should I declare,
Or say they met reception fair?
Or why the tidings say,

Which, varying, to Tantallon came
By hurrying posts, or fleeter fame,
 With every varying day?
And, first, they heard King James had won
 Ettall, and Wark, and Ford; and then,
 That Norham castle strong was ta'en.
At that sore marvelled Marmion;—
And Douglas hoped his Monarch's hand
Would soon subdue Northumberland:
 But whispered news there came,
That, while his host inactive lay,
And melted by degrees away,
King James was dallying off' the day
 With Heron's wily dame.—
Such acts to chronicles I yield;
 Go seek them there, and see:
Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
 And not a history.—
At length, they heard the Scottish host
On that high ridge had made their post,
 Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain;
And that brave Surrey many a band
Had gathered in the southern land,
 And marched into Northumberland,
 And camp at Wooler ta'en.
Marmion, like charger in the stall,
That hears without the trumpet call,
 Began to chafe and swear:—
“A sorry thing to hide my head
In castle, like a fearful maid,
 When such a field is near!
Needs must I see this battle-day;
Death to my fame, if such a fray
Were fought, and Marmion away!

The Douglas, too, I wot not why,
Hath 'bated of his courtesy:
No longer in his halls I'll stay." —
Then bade his band, they should array
For march against the dawning day.



INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SIXTH.

HEAP on more wood—the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deemed the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer:
Even heathen yet, the savage Dane
At Iol more deep the mead did drain;
High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate crew;
Then in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes decked the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dressed steer;
Caroused in seas of sable beer;
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown
The half-gnawed rib, and marrow-bone;
Or listened all, in grim delight,
While scalds yelled out the joys of fight.
Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,
While wildly loose their red locks fly,

And dancing round the blazing pile,
They make such barbarous mirth the while,
As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved, when the year its course had rolled,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honor to the holy night :
On Christmas eve the bells were rung ;
On Christmas eve the mass was sung ;
That only night, in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donned her kirtle sheen ;
The hall was dressed with holly green ;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all ;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doffed his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose ;
The lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of "post and pair."
All hailed, with uncontrolled delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied.
Went roaring up the chimney wide

The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving-man;
Then the grim boar's-head frowned on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garbed ranger tell,
How, when, and where, the monster fell;
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassail round in good brown bowls,
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.
There the huge sirloin reeked; hard by
Plumb-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;
Nor failed old Scotland to produce,
At such high-tide, her savory goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roared with blithsome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made;
But, O! what maskers richly dight
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

Still linger in our northern clime
Some remnants of the good old time ;
And still, within our valleys here,
We hold the kindred title dear,
Even when, perchance, its far-fetched claim
To Southron ear sounds empty name ;
For course of blood, our proverbs deem,
Is warmer than the mountain-stream.
And thus, my Christmas still I hold
Where my great-grandsire came of old ;
With amber beard, and flaxen hair,
And reverend apostolic air —
The feast and holy-tide to share,
And mix sobriety with wine,
And honest mirth with thoughts divine :
Small thought was his, in after time
E'er to be hitched into a rhyme.
The simple sire could only boast,
That he was loyal to his cost ;
The banished race of kings revered,
And lost his land, — but kept his beard.

In these dear halls, where welcome kind,
Is with fair liberty combined ;
Where cordial friendship gives the hand,
And flies constraint the magic wand
Of the fair dame that rules the land.
Little we heed the tempest drear,
While music, mirth, and social cheer,
Speed on their wings the passing year.
And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,
When not a leaf is on the bough.
Tweed loves them well, and turns again,
As loth to leave the sweet domain ;

And holds his mirror to her face,
 And clips her with a close embrace:—
 Gladly as he, we seek the dome,
 And as reluctant turn us home.

How just, that, at this time of glee,
 My thoughts should, Heber, turn to thee!
 For many a merry hour we've known,
 And heard the chimes of midnight tone.
 Cease, then, my friend! a moment cease,
 And leave these classic tomes in peace!
 Of Roman and of Grecian lore,
 Sure mortal brain can hold no more.
 These ancients, as Noll Bluff might say,
 Were "pretty fellows in their day,"
 But time and tide o'er all prevail—
 On Christmas eve a Christmas tale—
 Of wonder and of war—"Profane!
 What! leave the lofty Latin strain,
 Her stately prose, her verse's charms,
 To hear the clash of rusty arms;
 In Fairy Land or Limbo lost,
 To jostle conjuror and ghost,
 Goblin and witch!"—Nay, Heber dear,
 Before you touch my charter, hear,
 Though Leyden aids, alas! no more,
 My cause with many-languaged lore,
 This may I say.—in realms of death
 Ulysses meets Alcides' *wraith*;
 Æneas, upon Thracia's shore,
 The ghost of murdered Polydore,
 For omens, we in Livy cross,
 At every turn, *locutus Bos*.

As grave and duly speaks that ox,
As if he told the price of stocks ;
Or held, in Rome republican,
The place of Common-councilman.

All nations have their omens drear,
Their legends wild of wo and fear.
To Cambria look — the peasant see,
Bethink him of Glendowerdy,
And shun “the spirit’s blasted tree.”
The Highlander, whose red claymore
The battle turned on Maida’s shore,
Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,
If asked to tell a fairy tale :
He fears the vengeful Elfin King,
Who leaves that day his grassy ring ;
Invisible to human ken,
He walks among the sons of men.

Didst e’er, dear Heber, pass along
Beneath the towers of Franchémont,
Which, like an eagle’s nest in air,
Hang o’er the stream and hamlet fair? —
Deep in their vaults, the peasants say,
A mighty treasure buried lay,
Amassed through rapine, and through wrong,
By the last lord of Franchémont.
The iron chest is bolted hard,
A Huntsman sits, its constant guard ;
Around his neck his horn is hung,
His hanger in his belt is slung ;
Before his feet his bloodhounds lie :
An ’twere not for his gloomy eye,

Whose withering glance no heart can brook,
As true a huntsman doth he look,
As bugle e'er in brake did sound,
Or ever holloaed to a hound.
To chase the fiend, and win the prize,
In that same dungeon ever tries
An aged Necromantic Priest ;
It is an hundred years at least,
Since 'twixt them first the strife begun,
And neither yet has lost or won.
And oft the conjuror's words will make
The stubborn Demon groan and quake ;
And oft the bands of iron break,
Or burst one lock, that still amain,
Fast as 'tis opened, shuts again.
That magic strife within the tomb
May last until the day of doom,
Unless the Adept shall learn to tell
The very word that clenched the spell,
When Franch'mont locked the treasure cell.
An hundred years are past and gone,
And scarce three letters has he won.

Such general superstition may
Excuse for old Pitscottie say ;
Whose gossip history has given
My song the messenger from heaven,
That warned, in Lithgow, Scotland's King,
Nor less the infernal summoning.
May pass the monk of Durham's tale,
Whose Demon fought in Gothic mail ;
May pardon plead for Fordun grave,
Who told of Gifford's Goblin-Cave.

But why such instances to you,
Who, in an instant, can review
Your treasured hoards of various lore,
And furnish twenty thousand more?
Hoard, not like their's whose volumes rest
Like treasures in the Franch'mont chest;
While gripple owners still refuse
To others what they cannot use;
Give them the priest's whole century,
They shall not spell you letters three;
Their pleasure in the book's the same
The magpie takes in pilfered gem.
Thy volumes, open as thy heart,
Delight, amusement, science, art,
To every ear and eye impart;
Yet who, of all who thus employ them,
Can, like the owner's self, enjoy them? —
But, hark! I hear the distant drum:
The day of Flodden field is come. —
Adieu, dear Heber! life and health,
And store of literary wealth.

CANTO SIXTH.

THE BATTLE.

WHILE great events were on the gale,
And each hour brought a varying tale,
And the demeanor, changed and cold,
Of Douglas, fretted Marmion bold,
And, like the impatient steed of war,
He snuffed the battle from afar;
And hopes were none, that back again,
Herald should come from Terouenne,
Where England's King in leaguer lay,
Before decisive battle-day;
While these things were, the mournful Clare
Did in the Dame's devotions share:
For the good Countess ceaseless prayed,
To heaven and Saints, her Sons to aid,
And, with short interval, did pass
From prayer to book, from book to mass,
And all in high Baronial pride,—
A life both dull and dignified;—
Yet as Lord Marmion nothing pressed
Upon her intervals of rest,
Dejected Clara well could bear
The formal state, the lengthened prayer,
Though dearest to her wounded heart
The hours that she might spend apart.

I said, Tantallon's dizzy steep
Hung o'er the margin of the deep,
Many a rude tower and rampart there
Repelled the insult of the air,

Which, when the tempest vexed the sky,
Half breeze, half spray, came whistling by.
Above the rest, a turret square
Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,
Of sculpture rude, a stony shield;
The Bloody Heart was in the field,
And in the chief three mullets stood,
The cognizance of Douglas blood.
The turret held a narrow stair,
Which, mounted, gave you access where
A parapet's embattled row
Did seaward round the castle go;
Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
Sometimes in platform broad extending,
Its varying circle did combine
Bulwark, and bartisan, and line,
And bastion, tower, and vantage-coign;
Above the booming ocean leant
The far-projecting battlement;
The billows burst, in ceaseless flow,
Upon the precipice below.
Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
Gatc-works and walls were strongly manned;
No need upon the sea-girt side;
The steepy rock, and frantic tide,
Approach of human step denied:
And thus these lines, and ramparts rude,
Were left in deepest solitude.

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
Would to these battlements repair,
And muse upon her sorrows there,

And list the sea-bird's cry ;
Or slow, like noontide guide
Along the dark-gray bulwarks' side,
And ever on the heaving tide

Look down with weary eye.
Oft did the cliff and swelling main
Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane,
A home she might ne'er see again ;

For she had laid adown,
So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
And frontlet of the cloister pale,

And Benedictine gown :
It were unseemly sight, he said,
A novice out of convent shade. —
Now her bright locks, with sunny glow
Again adorned her brow of snow ;
Her mantle rich, whose borders, round,
A deep and fretted broidery bound,
In golden foldings sought the ground ;
Of holy ornament, alone
Remained a cross with ruby stone ;

And often did she look
On that which in her hand she bore,
With velvet bound, and broidered o'er, —
Her breviary book.

In such a place, so lone, so grim,
At dawning pale, or twilight dim,
It fearful would have been,
To meet a form so richly dressed,
With book in hand, and cross on breast,

And such a woful mien.
Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
To practice on the gull and crow,
Saw her, at distance, gliding slow,

And did by Mary swear, —
Some love-lorn Fay she might have been,
Or, in romance, some spell-bound queen;
For ne'er, in work-day world, was seen
A form so witching fair.

Once walking thus, at evening tide,
It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
And, sighing, thought — "The Abbess there,
Perchance, does to her home repair;
Her peaceful rule, where Duty, free,
Walks hand in hand with Charity;
Where oft Devotion's tranced glow
Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow,
That the enraptured sisters see
High vision, and deep mystery;
The very form of Hilda fair,
Hovering upon the sunny air,
And smiling on her votaries' prayer.
O! wherefore to my duller eye,
Did still the Saint her form deny!
Was it, that, seared by sinful scorn,
My heart could neither melt nor burn?
Or lie my warm affections low,
With him that taught them first to glow? —
Yet, gentle Abbess, well I knew,
To pay thy kindness grateful due,
And well could brook the mild command,
That ruled thy simple maiden band. —
How different now! condemned to bide
My doom from this dark tyrant's pride. —
But Marmion has to learn, ere long,
That constant mind, and hate of wrong,

Descended to a feeble girl,
 From Red De Clare, stout Gloster's Earl:
 Of such a stem, a sapling weak,
 He ne'er shall bend, although he break.

"But see! — what makes this armor here?"

For in her path there lay
 Targe, corslet, helm; — she viewed them near. —
 "The breast-plate pierced! — Aye, much I fear,
 Weak fence wert thou 'gainst foeman's spear,
 That hath made fatal entrance here,

As these dark blood-gouts say. —
 Thus Wilton! — Oh! not corslet's ward,
 Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
 Could be thy manly bosom's guard,

On yon disastrous day!" —
 She raised her eyes in mournful mood, —
 WILTON himself before her stood!
 It might have seemed his passing ghost,
 For every youthful grace was lost;
 And joy unwonted, and surprise,
 Gave their strange wildness to his eyes. —
 Expect not, noble dames and lords,
 That I can tell such scene in words:
 What skillful limner e'er would choose
 To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
 Unless to mortal it were given
 To dip his brush in dyes of heaven?

Far less can my weak line declare
 Each changing passion's shade;
 Brightening to rapture from despair,
 Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
 And joy, with her angelic air,
 And hope that paints the future fair,

Their varying hues displayed :
 Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
 Alternate conquering, shifting, blending,
 Till all, fatigued, the conflict yield,
 And mighty Love retains the field.
 Shortly I tell what then he said,
 By many a tender word delayed,
 And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
 And question kind, and fond reply.

DE WILTON'S HISTORY.

"Forget we that disastrous day,
 When senseless in the lists I lay.
 Thence dragged,—but how I cannot know,
 For sense and recollection fled,—
 I found me on a pallet low,
 Within my ancient beadsman's shed.
 Austin,—remember'st thou, my Clare,
 How thou didst blush, when the old man,
 When first our infant love began,
 Said we would make a matchless pair?—
 Menials, and friends, and kinsmen fled
 From the degraded traitor's bed,—
 He only held my burning head,
 And tended me for many a day,
 While wounds and fever held their sway.
 But far more needful was his care,
 When sense returned to wake despair,
 For I did tear the closing wound,
 And dash me frantic on the ground,
 If e'er I heard the name of Clare.
 At length, to calmer reason brought,
 Much by his kind attendance wrought,

With him I left my native strand,
And, in a palmer's weeds arrayed,
My hated name and form to shade,
I journeyed many a land ;
No more a lord of rank and birth,
But mingled with the dregs of earth,
Oft Austin for my reason feared,
When I would sit, and deeply brood
On dark revenge, and deeds of blood,
Or wild mad schemes upreared.
My friend at length fell sick, and said,
God would remove him soon ;
And while upon his dying bed,
He begged of me a boon —
If ere my deadliest enemy
Beneath my brand should conquered lie,
Even then my mercy should awake,
And spare his life for Austin's sake.

“ Still restless as a second Cain,
To Scotland next my rout was ta'en.
Full well the paths I knew ;
Fame of my fate made various sound,
That death in pilgrimage I found,
That I had perished of my wound, —
None cared which tale was true :
And living eye could never guess
De Wilton in his palmer's dress :
For now that sable slough is shed,
And trimmed my shaggy beard and head,
I scarcely know me in a glass.
A chance most wond'rous did provide,
That I should be that Baron's guide —

I will not name his name!—
Vengeance to God alone belongs;
But, when I think on all my wrongs,
My blood is liquid flame!
And ne'er the time shall I forget,
When in a Scottish hostel set,
Dark looks we did exchange;
What were his thoughts I cannot tell,
But in my bosom mustered Hell
Its plans of dark revenge.

“A word of vulgar augury,
That broke from me, I scarce knew why,
Brought on a village tale;
Which wrought upon his moody sprite,
And sent him armed forth by night.
I borrowed steed and mail,
And weapons, from his sleeping band;
And, passing from a postern door,
We met, and 'countered, hand to hand,—
He fell on Gifford-moor,
For the death-stroke my brand I drew,
(O then my helmed head he knew,
The Palmer's cowl was gone,)
Then had three inches of my blade
The heavy debt of vengeance paid,—
My hand the thought of Austin staid;
I left him there alone.—
O good old man! even from the grave,
Thy spirit could thy master save;
If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
Had Whitby's Abbess, in her fear,
Given to my hand this packet dear,

Of power to clear my injured fame,
And vindicate De Wilton's name. —
Perchance you heard the Abbess tell
Of the strange pageantry of Hell,
That broke our secret speech —
It rose from the infernal shade,
Or featly was some juggle played,
A tale of peace to teach.
Appeal to Heaven I judged was best,
When my name came among the rest.

“ Now here, within Tantallon hold,
To Douglas late my tale I told,
To whom my house was known of old.
Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
This eve anew shall dub me knight.
These were the arms that once did turn
The tide of fight on Otterburne,
And Harry Hotspur forced to yield,
When the Dead Douglas won the field.
These Angus gave — his armorer's care,
Ere morn, shall every breach repair;
For naught, he said, was in his halls,
But ancient armor on the walls,
And aged chargers in the stalls,
And women, priests, and gray-haired men;
The rest were all in Twisell glen.
And now I watch my armor here,
By law of arms, till midnight's near;
Then, once again a belted knight,
Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of light.

“ There soon again we meet, my Clare!
This Baron means to guide thee there:

Douglas reveres his king's command,
 Else would he take thee from his band.
 And there thy kinsman, Surrey, too,
 Will give De Wilton justice due.
 Now meeter far for martial broil,
 Firmer my limbs, and strung by toil,
 Once more"——"O, Wilton! must we then
 Risk new-found happiness again,
 Trust fate of arms once more?
 And is there not a humble glen,
 Where we, content and poor,
 Might build a cottage in the shade,
 A shepherd thou, and I to aid
 Thy task on dale and moor?—
 That reddening brow!—too well I know
 Not even thy Clare can peace bestow,
 While falsehood stains thy name:
 Go then to fight! Clare bids thee go!
 Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
 And weep a warrior's shame;
 Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
 Buckle the spurs upon thy heel,
 And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
 And send thee forth to fame!"—

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
 The midnight moonbeam slumbering lay,
 And poured its silver light, and pure,
 Through loop-hole and through embrasure,
 Upon Tantallon tower and hall;
 But chief where arched windows wide
 Illuminate the chapel's pride,
 The sober glances fall.

Much was there need; though, seamed with scars,
Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,
 Though two gray priests were there,
And each a blazing torch held high,
You could not by their blaze descry
 The chapel's carving fair.

Amid that dim and smoky light,
Checkering the silvery moonshine bright,
 A bishop by the altar stood,
 A noble lord of Douglas blood,
With mitre sheen and rocquet white;
 Yet showed his meek and thoughtful eye
 But little pride of prelacy:
 More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
 He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,
Than that beneath his rule he held
The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
Beside him ancient Angus stood,
Doffed his furred gown and sable hood:
O'er his huge form, and visage pale,
He wore a cap and shirt of mail;
And leaned his large and wrinkled hand
Upon the huge and sweeping brand,
Which wont, of yore, in battle-fray,
His foeman's limbs to shred away,
As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.
He seemed as, from the tombs around
 Rising at judgment-day,
Some giant Douglas may be found
 In all his old array;
So pale his face, so huge his limb,
So old his arms, his look so grim.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
 And Clare the spurs bound on his heels ;
 And think what next he must have felt,
 At buckling of the falchion belt !

And judge how Clara changed her hue,
 While fastening to her lover's side
 A friend, which, though in danger tried,
 He once had found untrue !

Then Douglas struck him with his blade :
 " Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
 I dub thee knight.

Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir !
 For king, for church, for lady fair,
 See that thou fight." —

And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
 Said, — " Wilton ! grieve not for thy woes,
 Disgrace, and trouble ;

For He, who honor best bestows,
 May give thee double." —

De Wilton sobbed, for sob he must —

" Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
 That Douglas is my brother !" —

" Nay, nay," old Angus said, " not so ;
 To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
 Thy wrongs no longer smother.

I have two sons in yonder field ;
 And, if thou meet'st them under shield,
 Upon them bravely — do thy worst ;
 And foul fall him that blenches first !"

Not far advanced was morning day,
 When Marmion did his troop array

To Surrey's camp to ride ;
 He had safe-conduct for his band,
 Beneath the royal seal and hand,
 And Douglas gave a guide :
 The ancient Earl, with stately grace,
 Would Clara on her palfrey place,
 And whispered, in an under tone,
 "Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown."
 The train from out the castle drew ;
 But Marmion stopped to bid adieu :—

"Though something I might plain," he said,
 "Of cold respect to stranger guest,
 Sent hither by your king's behest,
 While in Tantallon's towers I staid ;
 Part we in friendship from your land,
 And, noble Earl, receive my hand."—
 But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
 Folded his arms, and thus he spoke :—

"My manors, halls, and bowers, shall still
 Be open at my sovereign's will,
 To each one whom he lists, how'er
 Unmeet to be the owner's peer,
 My castles are my king's alone,
 From turret to foundation-stone—
 The hand of Douglas is his own ;
 And never shall in friendly grasp
 The hand of such as Marmion clasp."

Burned Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire,
 And shook his very frame for ire,
 And—"This to me!" he said,—
 "An 'twere not for thy hoary beard,
 Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
 To cleave the Douglas' head!

And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
 He, who does England's message here,
 Although the meanest in her state,
 May well, proud Angus, be thy mate:
 And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,

Even in thy pitch of pride,
 Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,
 (Nay, never look upon your lord,
 And lay your hands upon your sword,)

I tell thee, thou'rt defied!
 And if thou said'st, I am not peer
 To any lord in Scotland here,
 Lowland or Highland, far or near,

Lord Angus, thou hast lied!" —
 On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
 O'ercame the ashen hue of age:
 Fierce he broke forth: — "And dar'st thou then
 To beard the lion in his den,

The Douglas in his hall?
 And hop'st thou hence unscatched to go? —
 No, by Saint Bryde of Bothwell, no! —
 Up drawbridge, grooms — what, Warder ho!

Let the portcullis fall." —
 Lord Marmion turned, — well was his need,
 And dashed the rowels in his steed,
 Like arrow through the arch-way sprung,
 The ponderous grate behind him rung:
 To pass there was such scanty room,
 The bars, descending, razed his plume.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
 Just as it trembled on the rise;
 Not lighter does the swallow skim
 Along the smooth lake's level brim:

And when Lord Marmion reached his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.
"Horse! horse!" the Douglas cried, "and
chase!"

But soon he reigned his fury's pace:
"A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name. —
A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!
Did ever knight so foul a deed!
At first in heart it liked me ill,
When the King praised his clerkly skill,
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line:
So swore I, and I swear it still,
Let my boy-bishop fret his fill. —
Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
I thought to slay him where he stood. —
'Tis pity of him, too," he cried;
"Bold can he speak, and fairly ride:
I warrant him a warrior tried." —
With this his mandate he recalls,
And slowly seeks his castle halls.

The day in Marmion's journey wore;
Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
They crossed the heights of Stanrigg-moor.
His troop more closely there he scanned,
And missed the Palmer from the band. —
"Palmer or not," young Blount did say,
"He parted at the peep of day;
Good sooth it was in strange array."

“In what array?” said Marmion, quick.
“My lord, I ill can spell the trick;
But all night long, with clink and bang,
Close to my couch did hammers clang;
At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
And from a loop-hole while I peep,
Old Bell-the-Cat came from the Keep,
Wrapped in a gown of sables fair,
As fearful of the morning air;
Beneath, when that was blown aside,
A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
By Archibald won in bloody work,
Against the Saracen and Turk:
Last night it hung not in the hall:
I thought some marvel would befall.
And next I saw them saddled lead
Old Cheviot forth, the Earl’s best steed;
A matchless horse, though something old,
Prompt to his paces, cool and bold.
I heard the Sheriff Sholto say,
The Earl did much the Master pray
To use him on the battle-day;
But he preferred” — “Nay, Henry, cease!
Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace. —
Eustace, thou bear’st a brain — I pray,
What did Blount see at break of day?” —

“In brief, my lord, we both descried
(For I then stood by Henry’s side)
The Palmer mount, and outwards ride,
Upon the Earl’s own favorite steed;
All sheathed he was in armor bright,
And much resembled that same knight
Subdued by you in Cotswold fight;

Lord Angus wished him speed." —
 The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
 A sudden light on Marmion broke ;—
 " Ah! dastard fool, to reason lost!"
 He muttered; "'Twas not fay nor ghost
 I met upon the moonlight wold,
 But living man of earthly mould. —
 O dotage blind and gross!
 Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
 Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
 My path no more to cross. —
 How stand we now? — he told his tale
 To Douglas; and with some avail;
 'Twas therefore gloomed his rugged brow. —
 Will Surrey dare to entertain
 'Gainst Marmion, charge disproved and vain?
 Small risk of that I trow. —
 Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun;
 Must separate Constance from the Nun —
 O what a tangled web we weave,
 When first we practice to deceive. —
 A Palmer too! — no wonder why
 I felt rebuked beneath his eye:
 I might have known there was but one,
 Whose look could quell Lord Marmion."

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
 His troop, and reached, at eve, the Tweed,
 Where Lennel's convent closed their march.
 (There now is left but one frail arch,

Yet mourn thou not its cells;
 Our time a fair exchange has made;
 Hard by, in hospitable shade,
 A reverend pilgrim dwells,

Well worth the whole Bernardine brood,
 That e'er wore sandal, frock, or hood.)
 Yet did Saint Bernard's Abbot there
 Give Marmion entertainment fair,
 And lodging for his train and Clare.
 Next morn the Baron climbed the tower,
 To view afar the Scottish power,
 Encamped on Flodden' edge:
 The white pavilions made a show,
 Like remnants of the winter snow,
 Along the dusky ridge.
 Long Marmion looked: — at length his eye
 Unusual movement might descry
 Amid the shifting lines:
 The Scottish host drawn out appears,
 For, flashing on the hedge of spears,
 The eastern sunbeam shines.
 Their front now deepening, now extending,
 Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
 Now drawing back, and now descending,
 The skillful Marmion well could know
 They watched the motions of some foe,
 Who traversed' on the plain below.

Even so it was: — from Flodden ridge
 The Scots beheld the English host
 Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post,
 And, heedful, watched them as they crossed
 The Till by Twisell bridge.
 High sight it is, and haughty, while
 They dive into the deep defile;
 Beneath the caverned cliff they fall,
 Beneath the castle's airy wall.

By rock, by oak, by hawthorn tree,
 Troop after troop are disappearing;
 Troop after troop their banners rearing,
 Upon the eastern bank you see.
 Still pouring down the rocky den,
 Where flows the sullen Till,
 And rising from the dim-wood glen,
 Standards on standards, men on men,
 In slow succession still,
 And sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
 And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
 To gain the opposing hill.
 That morn, to many a trumpet-clang
 Twisel! thy rocks deep echo rang;
 And many a chief of birth and rank,
 Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank.
 Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
 In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,
 Had then from many an axe its doom,
 To give the marching columns room.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
 Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
 Since England gains the pass the while,
 And struggles through the deep defile?
 What checks the fiery soul of James?
 Why sits that champion of the Dames
 Inactive on his steed,
 And sees, between him and his land,
 Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
 His host Lord Surrey lead?
 What vails the vain knight-errant's brand?—
 O, Douglas, for thy leading wand!
 Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!

O for one hour of Wallace wight,
 Or well skilled Bruce, to rule the fight,
 And cry — “Saint Andrew and our right!”
 Another sight had seen that morn,
 From Fate’s dark book a leaf been torn,
 And Flodden had been Bannock-bourne! —
 The precious hour has passed in vain,
 And England’s host has gained the plain;
 Wheeling their march, and circling still,
 Around the base of Flodden-hill.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion’s eye,
 Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high, —
 “Hark! hark! my lord, an English drum!
 And see ascending squadrons come
 Between Tweed’s river and the hill,
 Foot, horse, and cannon; — hap what hap,
 My basnet to a ’prentice cap,
 Lord Surrey’s o’er the Till! —
 Yet more! yet more! — how fair arrayed
 They file from out the hawthorn shade,
 And sweep so gallant by!
 With all their banners bravely spread,
 And all their armor flashing high,
 Saint George might waken from the dead,
 To see fair England’s standards fly.” —
 “Stint in thy prate,” quoth Blount; “thou’dst best,
 And listen to our lord’s behest.” —
 With kindling brow Lord Marmion said, —
 “This instant be our band arrayed;
 The river must be quickly crossed,
 That we may join Lord Surrey’s host.
 If fight King James, — as well I trust,
 That fight he will, and fight he must. —

The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry, while the battle joins."—

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
Scarce to the Abbot bid adieu :
Far less would listen to his prayer,
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
And muttered, as the flood they view,
"The pheasant in the falcon's claw,
He scarce will yield to please a daw :
Lord Angus may the Abbot awe,
So Clare shall bide with me."
Then on that dangerous ford, and deep,
Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies creep
He ventured desperately :
And not a moment will he bide,
Till squire, or groom, before him ride ;
Headmost of all he stems the tide,
And stems it gallantly.
Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Herbert held her rein,
Stoutly they braved the current's course,
And, though far downward driven perforce,
The southern bank they gain ;
Behind them, straggling, came to shore,
As best they might, the train :
Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain ;
Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharmed, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion staid,
And breathed his steed, his men arrayed,

Then forward moved his band,
 Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
 He halted by a cross of stone,
 That, on a hillock standing lone,
 Did all the field command.

Hence might they see the full array
 Of either host, or deadly fray;
 Their marshalled lines stretched east and west,
 And fronted north and south,
 And distant salutation past
 From the loud cannon mouth;
 Not in the close successive rattle,
 That breathes the voice of modern battle,
 But slow and far between. —

The hillock gained, Lord Marmion staid:
 "Here, by this cross, he gently said,
 "You well may view the scene.
 Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare:
 O! think of Marmion in thy prayer! —
 Thou wilt not? — well, — no less my care
 Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare. —
 You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
 With ten picked archers of my train;
 With England if the day go hard,
 To Berwick speed amain. —
 But, if we conquer, cruel maid!
 My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
 When here we meet again." —
 He waited not for answer there,
 And would not mark the maid's despair,

Nor heed the discontented look
From either squire ; but spurred amain,
And, dashing through the battle-plain,
His way to Surrey took.

“ —The good Lord Marmion, by my life!

Welcome to danger's hour!

Short greeting serves in time of strife:—

Thus have I ranged my power:

Myself will rule this central host,

Stout Stanly fronts their right,

My sons command the vaward post,

With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight;

Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,

Shall be in rearward of the fight,

And succor those that need it most.

Now, gallant Marmion, well I know,

Would gladly to the vanguard go;

Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,

With thee their charge will blithely share;

There fight thine own retainers too,

Beneath De Burg, thy steward true.”—

“Thanks, noble Surrey!” Marmion said,

Nor further greeting there he paid;

But, parting like a thunderbolt,

First in the vanguard made a halt,

Where such a shout there rose

Of “Marmion! Marmion!” that the cry

Up Flodden mountains shrilling high,

Startled the Scottish foes.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still

With Lady Clare upon the hill.

On which (for far the day was spent)
The western sunbeams now were bent.
The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
Could plain their distant comrades view;
Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
"Unworthy office here to stay!
No hope of gilded spurs to-day. —
But, see! look up — on Flodden bent,
The Scottish foe has fired his tent." —

And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreathed in sable smoke:
Volumed and vast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
As down the hill they broke;
Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,

At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come. —
Scarce could they hear or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close. —
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway and with lance's thrust;

And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,

And fiends in upper air.
Long looked the anxious squires; their eye
Could in the darkness naught descry.
At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;

And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears ;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew.
Then marked they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plumed crests of chieftains brave,
Floating like foam upon the wave ;
 But naught distinct they see ;
Wide raged the battle on the plain ;
Spears shook, and falchions flashed amain
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain ;
Crests rose, and stooped, and rose again,
 Wild and disorderly.

Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly :
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight ;
 Although against them come,
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Highlandman,
And many a rugged Border clan,
 With Huntley, and with Home.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle ;
Though there the western mountaineer
Rushed with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broadsword plied :
'Twas vain. — But Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile, cheered Scotland's fight.
Then fell that spotless banner white.

The Howard's lion fell :
Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
 Around the battle yell.
The border slogan rent the sky !
A Home ! a Gordon ! was the cry ;
 Loud were the clanging blows ;
Advanced, — forced back, — now low, now high,
 The pennon sunk and rose ;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
 It wavered mid the foes.
No longer Blount the view could bear : —
"By heaven, and all its saints ! I swear,
 I will not see it lost !
Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads, and patter prayer, —
 I gallop to the host."
And to the fray he rode amain,
Followed by all the archer train.
The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
Made, for a space, an opening large, —
 The rescued banner rose,
But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
 It sunk among the foes.
Then Eustace mounted too ; — yet staid,
As loth to leave the helpless maid,
 When, fast as shaft can fly,
Bloodshot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,
Housing and saddle bloody red,
 Lord Marmion's steed rushed by ;

And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
A look and sign to Clara cast,
To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
Left in that dreadful hour alone:
Perchance her reason stoops or reels;
Perchance a courage, not her own,
Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
The scattered van of England wheels;
She only said, as loud in air
The tumult roared, "Is Wilton there?"—
They fly, or, maddened by despair,
Fight but to die.—"Is Wilton there?"—
With that, straight up the hill there rode
Two horsemen drenched with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,
A wounded knight they bore.
His hand still strained the broken brand;
His arms were smeared with blood and sand:
Dragged from among the horses' feet,
With dented shield, and helmet beat,
The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion! . . .
Young Blount his armor did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,
Said—"By Saint George, he's gone!
That spear-wound has our master sped,
And see the deep cut on his head!
Good night to Marmion."—
"Unnurtured Blount!—thy brawling cease:
He opes his eyes," said Eustace; "peace!"—

When, doffed his casque, he felt free air,
 Around 'gan Marmion wildly stare:—
 “Where's Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace where?
 Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!
 Redeem my pennon, — charge again!
 Cry — ‘Marmion to the rescue!’ — Vain!
 Last of my race, on battle plain
 That shout shall ne'er be heard again! —
 Yet my last thought is England's: — fly,
 To Dacre bear my signet-ring;
 Tell him his squadrons up to bring. —
 Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie:
 Tunstall lies dead upon the field;
 His life-blood stains the spotless shield:
 Edmund is down; — my life is left; —
 The Admiral alone is left.
 Let Stanley charge with spur of fire, —
 With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
 Full upon Scotland's central host,
 Or victory and England's lost. —
 Must I bid twice? — hence, varlets! fly!
 Leave Marmion here alone — to die.” —
 They parted, and alone he lay;
 Clare drew her from the sight away,
 Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
 And half he murmured, — “Is there none,
 Of all my halls have nurst,
 Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
 Of blessed water, from the spring,
 To slake my dying thirst!” —

O, woman! in our hours of ease,
 Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,

And variable as the shade
 By the light quivering aspen made ;
 When pain and anguish wring the brow
 A ministering angel thou ! —
 Scarce were the piteous accents said,
 When, with the Baron's casque, the maid
 To the nigh streamlet ran :
 Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears :
 The plaintive voice alone she hears,
 Sees but the dying man.
 She stooped her by the runnel's side,
 But in abhorrence backward drew,
 For, oozing from the mountain wide,
 Where raged the war, a dark red tide
 Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
 Where shall she turn ! — behold her mark
 A little fountain-cell,
 Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
 In a stone basin fell.
 Above, some half-worn letters say,
 "Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and pray,
 For the kind soul of Sybil Grey,
 Who built this cross and well."
 She filled the helm, and back she hied,
 And with surprise and joy espied
 A Monk supporting Marmion's head ;
 A pious man, whom duty brought
 To dubious verge of battle fought,
 To shrieve the dying, bless the dead.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
 And, as she stooped his brow to lave —
 "Is it the hand of Clare," he said,
 "Or injured Constance, bathes my head!"

Then, as remembrance rose, —
 "Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
 I must redress her woes.
 Short space, few words, are mine to spare,
 Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!" —
 "Alas!" she said, "the while, —
 O think of your immortal weal!
 In vain for Constance is your zeal;
 She — died at Holy Isle." —
 Lord Marmion started from the ground,
 As light as if he felt no wound;
 Though in the action burst the tide,
 In torrents, from his wounded side.
 "Then it was truth!" — he said — "I knew
 That the dark presage must be true.
 I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
 The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
 Would spare me but a day!
 For wasting fire, and dying groan,
 And priests slain on the altar stone,
 Might bribe him for delay.
 It may not be! — this dizzy trance —
 Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
 And doubly cursed my failing brand!
 (A sinful heart makes feeble hand." —
 Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
 Supported by the trembling Monk.

With fruitless labor, Clara bound,
 And strove to staunch, the gushing wound:
 The Monk, with unavailing cares,
 Exhausted all the Church's prayers;

Ever, he said, that, close and near,
A lady's voice was in his ear,
And that the priest he could not hear,
For that she ever sung,
*"In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the
dying!"*

So the notes rung;
"Avoid thee, Fiend! — with cruel hand,
Shake not the dying sinner's sand! —
O look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine;
O think on faith and bliss! —
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this." —
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swelled the gale,
And — STANLEY! was the cry; —
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
And fired his glazing eye;
With dying hand, above his head
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted "Victory! —
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!"
Were the last words of Marmion.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots, around their king,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vaward wing,

Where Huntley, and where Home? —
O for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Oliver,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died!
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
While yet on Flodden side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils and bleeds and dies,
Our Caledonian pride!
In vain the wish — for far away,
While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray. —
"O Lady," cried the Monk, "away!" —
And placed her on her steed;
And led her to the chapel fair,
Of Tilmouth upon Tweed
There all the night they spent in prayer,
And, at the dawn of morning, there
She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hailed,
In headlong charge their horse assailed:
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their king.

But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,

Unbroken was the ring ;
The stubborn spearmen still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.

No thought was there of dastard flight ; --
Linked in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well :

Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded king.
Then skillful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shattered bands ;

And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.

Then did their loss his foemen know,
Their king, their lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
Dissolves in silent dew.

Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
While many a broken band,
Disordered, through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land ;

To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong ;

Still from the sire the son shall hear
 Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
 Of Flodden's fatal field,
 Where shivered was fair Scotland's spear,
 And broken was her shield!

Day dawns upon the mountain's side: —
 There, Scotland! lay thy bravest pride,
 Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one;
 The sad survivors all are gone. —
 View not that corpse mistrustfully,
 Defaced and mangled though it be:
 Nor to yon Border castle high
 Look northward with upbraiding eye:
 Nor cherish hope in vain,
 That, journeying far on foreign strand,
 The Royal Pilgrim to his land
 May yet return again.
 He saw the wreck his rashness wrought;
 Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
 And fell on Flodden plain:
 And well in death his trusty brand,
 Firm clenched within his manly hand,
 Beseemed the monarch slain.
 But, O! how changed since yon blythe night! —
 Gladly I turn me from the sight
 Unto my tale again.

Short is my tale: — Fitz-Eustace' care
 A pierced and mangled body bare
 To moated Lichfield's lofty pile;
 And there, beneath the southern aisle,
 A tomb, with Gothic sculpture fair,
 Did long Lord Marmion's image bear.

(Now vainly for its site you look;
 'Twas levelled, when fanatic Brook
 The fair cathedral stormed and took;
 But, thanks to heaven and good Saint Chad,
 A guerdon meet the spoiler had!)
 There erst was martial Marmion found,
 His feet upon a couchant hound,
 His hands to heaven upraised;
 And all around, on scutcheon rich,
 And tablet carved, and fretted niche,
 His arms and feats were blazed.
 And yet, though all was carved so fair,
 And priests for Marmion breathed the prayer,
 The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
 From Ettrick woods, a peasant swain
 Followed his lord to Flodden plain,—
 One of those flowers, whom plaintive lay
 In Scotland mourns as “wede away:”
 Sore wounded, Sybil's Cross he spied,
 And dragged him to its foot, and died,
 Close by the noble Marmion's side.
 The spoilers stripped and gashed the slain,
 And thus their corpses were mista'en;
 And thus, in the proud Baron's tomb,
 The lowly woodsman took the room

Less easy task it were, to show
 Lord Marmion's nameless grave, and low.
 They dug his grave e'en where he lay,
 But every mark is gone;
 Time's wasting hand has done away
 The simple Cross of Sybil Grey,
 And broke her font of stone:

But yet from out the little hill
Oozes the slender springlet still.

Oft halts the stranger there,
For thence may best his curious eye
The memorable field descry ;

And shepherd boys repair
To seek the water-flag and rush,
And rest them by the hazel-bush,

And plait their garlands fair ;
Nor dream they sit upon the grave

That holds the bones of Marmion brave. —

When thou shalt find the little hill,

With thy heart commune, and be still.

If ever, in temptation strong,

Thou left'st the right path for the wrong ;

If every devious step, thus trode,

Still led thee farther from the road ;

Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom

On noble Marmion's lowly tomb ;

But say, "He died a gallant knight,

With sword in hand, for England's right."

I do not rhyme to that dull elf,

Who cannot image to himself,

That all through Flodden's dismal night,

Wilton was foremost in the fight ;

That, when brave Surrey's steed was slain,

'Twas Wilton mounted him again ;

'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hewed

Amid the spearman's stubborn wood ;

Unnamed by Hollinshed or Hall,

He was the living soul of all ;

That, after fight, his faith made plain,

He won his rank and lands again ;

And charged his old paternal shield
 With bearings won on Flodden field. —
 Nor sing I to that simple maid,
 To whom it must in terms be said,
 That king and kinsmen did agree,
 To bless fair Clara's constancy;
 Who cannot, unless I relate,
 Paint to her mind the bridal's state;
 That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke,
 More, Sands, and Denny, passed the joke:
 That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
 And Catherine's hand the stocking threw;
 And afterwards, for many a day,
 That it was held enough to say,
 In blessing to a wedded pair,
 "Love they like Wilton and like Clare!"

L'ENVOY.

TO THE READER.

Why then a final note prolong,
 Or lengthen out a closing song,
 Unless to bid the gentles speed,
 Who long have listed to my rede?
 To statesmen grave, if such may deign
 To read the Minstrel's idle strain,
 Sound head, clean hand, and piercing wit,
 And patriotic heart — as PITT!
 A garland for the hero's crest,
 And twined by her he loves the best;
 To every lovely lady bright,
 What can I wish but faithful knight?

To every faithful lover too,
What can I wish but lady true?
And knowledge to the studious sage;
And pillow soft to head of age.
To thee, dear schoolboy, whom my lay
Has cheated of thy hour of play,
Light task, and merry holiday!
To all, to each, a fair good night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light!



THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO FIRST.

THE CHASE.

HARP of the North ! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fit'ul breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string —
Oh minstrel Harp ! still must thine accents sleep ?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep ?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful, or subdued the proud.
At each according pause, was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high !
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed ;
For still the burthen of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's match-
less eye.

Oh wake once more ! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray ;
Oh wake once more ! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay ;
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then silent be no more ! Enchantress, wake again.

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade ;
But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

As chief who hears his warder call
"To arms ! the foemen storm the wall !"
The antlered monarch of the waste
Sprang from his heathery couch in haste.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook ;
Like crested leader proud and high,
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky ;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh :

Then, as the headmost foes appeared,
With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

Yelled on the view the opening pack —
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back ;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awakened mountain gave response.
An hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,
Clattered an hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rang out,
An hundred voices joined the shout.
With hark, and whoop, and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert covered the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken,
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din
Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war;
Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern where 'tis told
A giant made his den of old ;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in the pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stayed perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse ;

And of the trackers of the deer
Scarce half the lessening pack was near ;
So shrewdly, on the mountain side,
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

The noble Stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow,
Where broad extended far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wandered o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And pondered refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copsewood gray
That waved and wept on Loch-Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Ben-venue.
Fresh vigor with the hope returned —
With flying foot the heath he spurned,
Held westward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chase.

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambus-more ;
What reins were tightened in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air ;
Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith —
For twice, that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant Stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reached the lake of Vennachar ;
And when the Brig of Turk was won,
The headmost Horseman rode alone.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel ;
For, jaded now, and spent with toil,
Embossed with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The laboring Stag strained full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game ;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds staunch ;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain,
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

The hunter marked that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deemed the Stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the way ;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes ;
For the death-wound, and death-halloo,
Mustered his breath, his whinyard drew ;
But, thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunned the shock,
And turned him from the opposing rock ;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosachs' wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.

There while, close couched, the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

Close on the hounds the hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanished game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labors o'er,
Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no more.
Then, touched with pity and remorse,
He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse:—
“I little thought, when first thy rein
I slacked upon the banks of Seine,
That highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Wo worth the chase, wo worth the day,
That cost thy life, my gallant gray!”

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limped, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase:
Close to their master's side they pressed,
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answered with their scream,

Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seemed an answering blast ;
And on the hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day ;
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it showed.

The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way ;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path, in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle ;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
Their rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair ;
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dew-drop sheen,
The briar-rose fell in streamers green,

And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there ;
The primrose pale, and violet flower,
Found in each clift a narrow bower ;
Fox-glove and night-shade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain ;
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath ;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock ;
And higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrowed sky ;
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glistening streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue ;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim
As served the wild duck's brood to swim ;
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,

Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace ;
And farther as the hunter strayed,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seemed to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat ;
Yet broader floods extending still,
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far-projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid ;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch-Katrine lay beneath him rolled ;
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light ;
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Ben-venue
Down to the lake in masses threw
Craggs, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurled,
The fragments of an earlier world ;

A wildering forest feathered o'er
His ruined sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

From the steep promontory gazed
The Stranger, raptured and amazed;
And, "What a scene was here," he cried,
"For princely pomp or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister gray.
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn!
How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
Chime, when the groves were still and mute!
And, when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matin's distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell!—
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewildered stranger call
To friendly feast and lighted hall.

"Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now — beshrew yon nimble deer!—
Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
The copse must give my evening fare;

Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that — the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place ;—
A summer night, in greenwood spent,
Were but to-morrow's merriment ;
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better missed than found ;
To meet with highland plunderers here,
Were worse than loss of steed or deer
I am alone ;—my bugle strain
May call some straggler of the train ;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried."

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel, guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow-twigg to lave ;
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touched this silver strand,
Just as the hunter left his stand,
And stood concealed amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain,

With head upraised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art.
In listening mood, she seemed to stand
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown —
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow;
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had trained her pace —
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew;
E'en the slight hare-bell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue —
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear.

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;

And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye ;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confessed
The guileless movements of her breast ;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or wo or pity claimed a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the north.
One only passion, unrevealed,
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not less purely felt the flame ;—
Oh need I tell that passion's name ?

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne : —
“Father!” she cried — the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
Awhile she paused, no answer came —
“Malcolm, was thine the blast?” the name
Less resolutely uttered fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
“A stranger I,” the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid alarmed, with hasty oar,
Pushed her light shallop from the shore,

And, when a space was gained between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen ;
(So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing,)
Then safe, though fluttered and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly pressed its signet sage,
Yet had not quenched the open truth,
And fiery vehemence of youth ;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire
Of hasty love, or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould,
For hardy sports, or contest bold ;
And though in peaceful garb arrayed,
And weaponless, except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armor trod the shore.
Slighting the petty need he showed,
He told of his benighted road :
His ready speech flowed fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy ;
Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland
Less used to sue than to command.

Awhile the maid the Stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at last replied,

That highland halls were open still
To wildered wanderers of the hill.
"Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home :
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pulled for you ;
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer."
"Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has erred," he said ;
"No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand,
I found a fay in fairy land."

"I well believe," the maid replied,
As her light skiff approached the side
"I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch-Katrine's shore
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight—
A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
Was on the visioned future bent.
He saw your steed, a dappled gray,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way ;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,

That tasselled horn so gaily gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron's plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be,
To grace a guest of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deemed it was my father's horn,
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne."
The Stranger smiled:—"Since to your home,
A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprise,
For one kind glance of those bright eyes;
Permit me, first, the task to guide
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."
The maid, with smile suppressed and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom, sure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had grasped an oar:
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their passage ply.
Nor frequent does the bright oar break
The darkening mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

The Stranger viewed the shore around;
'Twas all so close with copse-wood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there.

Until the mountain-maiden showed
A clambering unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled screen,
And opened on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground ;
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device ;
Of such materials, as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.
Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite ;
While moss, and clay, and leaves combined,
To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees, overhead,
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And withered heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favored flower,
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch-Katrine's keen and searching air.

An instant in this porch she staid,
And gayly to the Stranger said,
"On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!"

"My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee."
He crossed the threshold — and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rushed,
But soon for vain alarm he blushed,
When on the floor he saw displayed,
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropped from the sheath, that careless flung
Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;
For, all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase:
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusked trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died,
And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
Pennons and flags defaced and stained,
That blackening streaks of blood retained,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the sylvan hall.

The wondering Stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised;

Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poised and swayed,
"I never knew but one," he said,
"Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field."
She sighed, then smiled and took the word;
"You see the guardian champion's sword.
As light it trembles in his hand,
As in my grasp a hazel wand;
My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart;
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now and menials old."

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame;
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew,
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unasked his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the Stranger names —
"The Knight of Snowdown, James Fitz-James;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,

By their good swords had held with toil;
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning with Lord Moray's train
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wandered here."

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire;
Well showed the elder lady's mien,
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks displayed
The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Showed she was come of gentle race;
'Twere strange in ruder rank to find
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turned all inquiry light away.
"Wierd women we! by dale and down,
We dwell afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
On wandering knights our spells we cast;
While viewless minstrels touch the string,
'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing."
She sang, and still a harp unseen
Filled up the symphony between.

SONG.

“Soldier, rest! thy warfare o’er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle’s enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o’er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

“No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor’s clang, or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark’s shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here’s no war-steed’s neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.”

She paused — then, blushing, led the lay
To grace the stranger of the day;
Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,

Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

SONG — CONTINUED.

“Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveille.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveille.”

The hall was cleared — the Stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft an hundred guests had lain,
And dreamed their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes;
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honor's lost.
Then — from my couch may heavenly might
Chase that worst phantom of the night! —

Again returned the scenes of youth,
Of confident undouting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long estranged.
They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.
And doubt distracts him at the view,
Oh were his senses false or true!
Dreamed he of death, or broken vow,
Or is it all a vision now!

At length, with Ellen in a grove,
He seemed to walk, and speak of love;
She listened with a blush and sigh;
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp;
The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore.
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recalled the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the Stranger fixed his eye
Where that huge falchion hung on high.

And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose, and sought the moonshine pure.

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom,
Wafted around their rich perfume ;
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
The aspens slept beneath the calm ;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Played on the water's still expanse —
Wild were the heart whose passion's sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray !
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his breast : —
“Why is it at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race ?
Can I not mountain maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas eye ?
Can I not view a highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand ?
Can I not frame a fevered dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme ? —
I'll dream no more — by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resigned.)
My midnight orison said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more.”
His midnight orison he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
And sank in undisturbed repose ;
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawned on Ben-venue

CANTO SECOND.

THE ISLAND.

AT morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'Tis morning prompts the linnets' blithest lay,
All nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving, with reviving day;
And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
Wafting the stranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence roused a Minstrel gray,
And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mixed with the sounding harp, oh white-haired Allan-
bane!

SONG.

"Not faster yonder rowers' might
Flings from their oars the spray;
Not faster yonder rippling bright,
That tracks the shallop's course in light,
Melts in the lake away,
Than men from memory erase
The benefits of former days;
Then, Stranger, go! good speed the while.
Nor think again of the lonely isle.

"High place to thee in royal court,
High place in battled line,
Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport,
Where Beauty sees the brave resort,
The honored meed be thine!

True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
And lost in love's and friendship's smile,
Be memory of the lonely isle.

SONG — CONTINUED.

“But if beneath yon southern sky
A plaided stranger roam,
Whose drooping crest and stifed sigh,
And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
Pine for his highland home :
Then, warrior, then be thine to show
The care that soothes a wanderer's wo ;
Remember then thy hap erewhile
A stranger in the lonely isle.

“Or if on life's uncertain main
Mishap shall mar thy sail ;
If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
Wo, want, and exile thou sustain
Beneath the fickle gale ;
Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
But come where kindred worth shall smile
To greet thee in the lonely isle.”

As died the sounds upon the tide,
The shallop reached the main-land side,
And ere his onward way he took,
The Stranger cast a lingering look,
Where easily his eye might reach
The Harper on the islet beach,

Reclined against a blighted tree,
As wasted, gray, and worn as he.
To minstrel meditation given,
His reverend brow was raised to heaven,
As from the rising sun to claim
A sparkle of inspiring flame.
His hand, reclined upon the wire,
Seemed watching the awakening fire ;
So still he sate, as those who wait
Till judgment speak the doom of fate ;
So still, as if no breeze might dare
To lift one lock of hoary hair ;
So still as life itself were fled,
In the last sound his harp had sped.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beside him Ellen sate and smiled.
Smiled she to see the stately drake
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vexed spaniel, from the beach,
Bayed at the prize beyond his reach ?
Yet tell me then the maid who knows,
Why deepened on her cheek the rose ?—
Forgive, forgive, Fidelity !
Perchance the maiden smiled to see
Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
And stop and turn to wave anew ;
And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
Show me the fair would scorn to spy,
And prize such conquest of her eye !

While yet he loitered on the spot,
It seemed as Ellen marked him not,

But when he turned him to the glade,
One courteous parting sign she made,
And after, oft the knight would say,
That not when prize of festal day
Was dealt him by the brightest fair
Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
So highly did his bosom swell,
As at that simple mute farewell.
Now with a trusty mountain guide,
And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
He parts — the maid, unconscious still,
Watched him wind slowly round the hill;
But when his stately form was hid,
The guardian in her bosom chid —
"Thy Malcolm, vain and selfish maid!"
'Twas thus upbraiding conscience said;
"Not so had Malcolm idly hung
On the smooth phrase of southern tongue;
Not so had Malcolm strained his eye
Another step than thine to spy."
"Wake, Allan-bane!" aloud she cried,
To the old Minstrel by her side,
"Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
And warm thee with a noble name;
Pour forth the glory of the Græme."
Scarce from her lip the word had rushed,
When deep the conscious maiden blushed,
For of his clan, in hall and bower,
Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

The Minstrel waked his harp — three times
Arose the well-known martial chimes,

And thrice their high heroic pride
In melancholy murmurs died.
"Vainly thou bidd'st, oh noble maid!"
Clasping his withered hands, he said,
"Vainly thou bidd'st me wake the strain,
Though all unwont to bid in vain.

Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned;
I touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful answer notes of wo;
And the proud march which victors tread,
Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
Oh well for me, if mine alone
That dirge's deep prophetic tone!
If, as my tuneful fathers said,
This harp, which erst Saint Modan swayed,
Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

"But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed
The eve thy sainted mother died;
And such the sounds which, while I strove
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
And, disobedient to my call,
Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall,
Ere Douglasses to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven.
Oh! if yet worse mishap and wo
My master's house must undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair,
Brood in these accents of despair

No future bard, sad harp! shall fling
 Triumph or rapture from thy string;
 One short, one final strain shall flow,
 Fraught with unutterable wo,
 Then shivered shall thy fragments lie,
 Thy master cast him down and die."

Soothing she answered him, "Assuage,
 Mine honored friend, the fears of age;
 All melodies to thee are known,
 That harp has rung, or pipe has blown,
 In lowland vale or highland glen,
 From Tweed to Spey — what marvel, then,
 At times, unbidden notes should rise,
 Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
 Entangling, as they rush along,
 The war-march with the funeral song?
 Small ground is now for boding fear;
 Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.
 My sire, in native virtue great,
 Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
 Not then to fortune more resigned,
 Than yonder oak might give the wind;
 The graceful foliage storms may reave,
 The noble stem they cannot grieve.
 For me" — she stooped, and, looking round,
 Plucked a blue hare-bell from the ground,
 "For me, whose memory scarce conveys
 An image of more splendid days,
 This little flower, that loves the lea,
 May well my simple emblem be;
 It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
 That in the King's own garden grows,

And when I place it in my hair,
Allan, a bard is bound to swear
He ne'er saw coronet so fair."
Then playfully the chaplet wild
She wreathed in her dark locks, and smiled.

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway,
Wiled the old harper's mood away.
With such a look as hermits throw
When angels stoop to soothe their wo,
He gazed, till fond regret and pride
Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied:—
"Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
The rank, the honors thou hast lost!
Oh might I live to see thee grace,
In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,
To see my favorite's step advance,
The lightest in the courtly dance,
The cause of every gallant's sigh,
And leading star of every eye,
And theme of every minstrel's art,
The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!"

"Fair dreams are these," the maiden cried,
(Light was her accent, yet she sighed,)
"Yet is this mossy rock to me
Worth splendid chair and canopy;
Nor would my footstep spring more gay
In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
To royal minstrel's lay as thine;
And then for suitors proud and high,
To bend before my conquering eye,

Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,
 That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
 The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
 The terror of Loch-Lomond's side,
 Would, at my suit, thou know'st delay
 A Lennox foray — for a day."

The ancient bard his glee repressed:
 "Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
 For who, through all this western wild,
 Named black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled?
 In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;
 I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
 Courtiers gave place before the stride
 Of the undaunted homicide;
 And since, though outlawed, hath his hand
 Full sternly kept his mountain land.
 Who else dared give — ah! wo the day,
 That I such hated truth should say —
 The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
 Disowned by every noble peer,
 Even the rude refuge we have here?
 Alas, this wild marauding chief
 Alone might hazard our relief,
 And now thy maiden charms expand,
 Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
 Full soon may dispensation sought,
 To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
 (Then, though an exile on the hill,
 Thy father, as the Douglas, still
 Be held in reverence and fear.)
 But though to Roderick thou'rt so dear,
 That thou might'st guide with silken thread
 Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread;

Yet, oh loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion's mane."

"Minstrel," the maid replied, and high
Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
"My debts to Roderick's house I know ;
All that a mother could bestow,
To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrowed o'er her sister's child :
To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,
A deeper, holier debt is owed ;
And, could I pay it with my blood,
Allan! Sir Roderick should command
My blood, my life — but not my hand.
Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
A votaress in Maronan's cell ;
Rather through realms beyond the sea,
Seeking the world's cold charity,
Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.

"Thou shak'st, good friend, thy tresses gray—
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?—I grant him brave,
But wild as Blacklinn's thundering wave ;
And generous'—save vindictive mood,
Or jealous transport chafe his blood ;
I grant him true to friendly band,
As his claymore is to his hand :

But oh! that very blade of steel
 More mercy for a foe would feel:
 I grant him liberal, to fling
 Among his clan the wealth they bring,
 When back by lake and glen they wind,
 And in the Lowland leave behind,
 Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
 A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
 The hand, that for my father fought,
 I honor, as his daughter ought;
 But can I clasp it reeking red,
 From peasants slaughtered in their shed?
 (No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
 They make his passions darker seem,
 And flash along his spirit high,
 Like lightning o'er the midnight sky.
 While yet a child — and children know,
 Instinctive taught, the friend and foe —
 I shuddered at his brow of gloom,
 His shadowy plaid, and sable plume;
 A maiden grown, I ill could bear
 His haughty mien and lordly air;
 But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
 In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
 (I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
 A Douglas knew the word, with fear.)
 To change such odious theme were best —
 What think'st thou of our stranger guest?"

"What think I of him? — wo the while
 That brought such wanderer to our isle!
 Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
 For Tine-man forged by fairy lore

What time he leagued, no longer foes,
His Border spear with Hotspur's bows,
Did, self unscabbarded, foreshow
The footstep of a secret foe.
If courtly spy, and harbored here,
What may we for the Douglas fear?
What for this island, deemed of old
Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
If neither spy nor foe, I pray
What yet may jealous Roderick say!
—Nay, wave not thy disdainful head!
Bethink thee of the discord dread,
That kindled when at Beltane game,
Thou ledd'st the dance with Malcolm Græme;
Still, though thy sire the peace renewed,
Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud;
Beware! — But hark, what sounds are these?
My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
No weeping birch, nor aspens wake,
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake,
Still is the canna's hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard,
And hark again! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

Far up the lengthened lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four manned and masted barges grew,
And bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steered full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchoil they passed,
And, to the windward as they cast,

Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's bannered pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave ;
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies ;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke ;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow
From their loud chanters down, and sweep
The furrowed bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sounds, by distance tame,
Mellowed along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,
Wailed every harsher note away ;
Then, bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear ;
Those thrilling sounds, that call the might
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
And, hurrying at the signal dread,
The battered earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Expressed their merry marching on,

Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows ;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broadsword upon target jarred ;
And groaning pause, ere yet again,
Condensed, the battle yelled amain ;
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout,
And bursts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's conquest — all were there.
Nor ended thus the strain ; but slow,
Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,
And changed the conquering clarion swell,
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

The war-pipes ceased ; but lake and hill
Were busy with their echoes still ;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain
Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
While loud an hundred clansmen raise
Their voices in their chieftain's praise.
Each boatman, bending to his oar,
With measured sweep the burthen bore,
In such wild cadence, as the breeze
Makes through December's leafless trees.
The chorus first could Allan know,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine, ho ! iro !"
And near, and nearer as they rowed,
Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

BOAT SONG.

Hail to the chief who in triumph advances!
 Honored and blest be the evergreen pine!
 Long may the Tree in his banner that glances,
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
 Heaven send it happy dew,
 Earth lend it sap anew,
 Gayly to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
 While every highland glen
 Sends our shout back agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
 When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf on the
 mountain,
 The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
 Moored in the rifted rock,
 Proof to the tempest's shock,
 Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
 Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
 Echo his praises agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,
 And Banachar's groans to our slogan replied;
 Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
 And the best of Loch-Lomond lie dead on her side.
 Widow and Saxon maid
 Long shall lament our raid,

Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with wo;
Lennox and Leven-glen
Shake when they hear agen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars, for the evergreen Pine!
Oh! that the rose-bud that graces yon islands,
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
Oh that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honored and blessed in their shadow might grow!
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepest glen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

With all her joyful female band,
Had Lady Margaret sought the strand.
Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,
And high their snowy arms they threw,
As echoing back with shrill acclaim
And chorus wild the chieftain's name;
While, prompt to please, with mother's art,
The darling passion of his heart,
The Dame called Ellen to the strand,
To greet her kinsman ere he land:
"Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
And shun to wreath a victor's brow?"
Reluctantly and slow, the maid
The unwelcome summoning obeyed,
And, when a distant bugle rung,
In the mid-path aside she sprung:
"List, Allan-bane! from mainland cast,
I hear my father's signal blast.

Be ours," she cried, "the skiff to guide,
And waft him from the mountain side."
Then, like a sunbeam swift and bright,
She darted to her shallop light,
And, eagerly, while Roderick scanned,
For her dear form, his mother's band,
The islet far behind her lay,
And she had landed in the bay.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven;
And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek,
It would not stain an angel's cheek,
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head!
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely pressed,
Such holy drops her tresses steeped,
Though 'twas an hero's eye that weeped.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Marked she, that fear (affection's proof)
Still held a graceful youth aloof;
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

Allan, with wistful look the while,
Marked Roderick landing on the isle;
His master piteously he eyed,
Then gazed upon the chieftain's pride,
Then dashed, with hasty hand, away
From his dimmed eye the gathering spray;

And Douglas, as his hand he laid
On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said,
"Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy
In my poor follower's glistening eye?
I'll tell thee:— he recalls the day,
When in my praise he led the lay
O'er the arched gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minstrel answered loud,
When Percy's Norman pennon, won
In bloody field, before me shone,
And twice ten knights, the least a name
As mighty as yon chief may claim,
Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
Was I of all that marshalled crowd,
Though the waned crescent owned my might,
And in my train trooped lord and knight,
Though Blantyre hymned her holiest lays,
And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise
As when this old man's silent tear,
And this poor maid's affection dear,
A welcome give more kind and true
Than aught my better fortunes knew.
Forgive, my friend, a father's boast;
Oh! it outbeggars all I lost!"

Delightful praise!—like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appeared—
For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard
The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide:
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;

And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favorite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
And trust, while in such guise she stood,
Like fabled Goddess of the Wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail,
To balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

Of stature fair, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curled closely round his bonnet blue;
Trained to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy;
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe,
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though winged with fear,
Outstripped in speed the mountaineer;
Right up Ben-Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.
His form accorded with a mind
Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame;

It danced as lightsome in his breast,
As played the feather on his crest.
Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,
His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
And bards, who saw his features bold,
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.
Now back they wend their watery way,
And, "Oh my sire!" did Ellen say,
"Why urge thy chase so far astray?
And why so late returned? And why" —
The rest was in her speaking eye.
"My child, the chase I follow far,
'Tis mimicry of noble war;
And with that gallant pastime reft,
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I strayed
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade,
Nor strayed I safe; for, all around,
Hunters and horsemen scoured the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risked life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood
Guided my steps not unpursued;
And Roderick shall his welcome make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me agen."

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Reddened at sight of Malcolm Græme.

Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Failed aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away
The morning of that summer day ;
But at high noon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared,
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seemed toiling in his head ;
Yet was the evening banquet made,
Ere he assembled round the flame,
His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
And Ellen too ; then cast around
His eyes, then fixed them on the ground,
As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he played,
Then raised his haughty brow, and said :—

“Short be my speech ; nor time affords,
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father — if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim,
Mine honored mother ; Ellen — why,
My cousin, turn away thine eye ?
And Græme ; in whom I hope to know
Full soon a noble friend or foe,
When age shall give thee thy command,
And leading in thy native land —
List all ! The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk, who came
To share their monarch's sylvan game,

Themselves in bloody toils were snared,
And when the banquet they prepared,
And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarrow braes and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone streams of Ettricke glide,
And from the silver Teviot's side ;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless, and so ruthless known,
Now hither comes ; his end the same,
The same pretext of sylvan game.
What grace for Highland chiefs judge ye,
By fate of Border chivalry.
Yet more ; amid Glenfinlas green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
This by espial sure I know :
Your counsel in the strait I show."

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turned their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire, that to her son.
The hasty color went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme ;
But, from his glance it well appeared,
'Twas but for Ellen that he feared ;
While sorrowful, but undismayed,
The Douglas thus his counsel said :—
" Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
It may but thunder and pass o'er ;

Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower ;
For well thou know'st, at this gray head
The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek, apart,
The refuge of some forest cell ;
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till, on the mountain and the moor,
The stern pursuit be passed and o'er.

“No, by mine honor!” Roderick said,
“So help me heaven, and my good blade !
No, never ! Blasted be yon pine,
My fathers' ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart !
Hear my blunt speech. Grant me this maid
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid ;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock enow ;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
Will bind us to each Western Chief.
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
The guards shall start in Stirling's porch ;
And when I light the nuptial torch,
A thousand villages in flames,
Shall scare the slumbers of King James

— Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these sighs, I pray;
I meant not all my heat might say.
Small need of inroad, or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foiled King, from pathless glen,
Shall bootless turn him home agen.

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean-tide's incessant roar,
Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till wakened by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,
And saw unmeasured depth around,
And heard unintermitted sound,
And thought the battled fence so frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale;
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel,
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears foreshow!
Thus, Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawned around,
By crossing terrors wildly tossed,
Still for the Douglas fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
To buy his safety with her hand.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,

And eager rose to speak — but ere
 His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
 Had Douglas marked the hectic strife,
 Where death seemed combating with life;
 For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
 One instant rushed the throbbing blood,
 Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
 Left its domain as wan as clay.

“Roderick, enough! enough!” he cried,
 “My daughter cannot be thy bride;
 Not that the blush to wooer dear,
 Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
 It may not be — forgive her, chief,
 Nor hazard aught for our relief.

Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
 Will level a rebellious spear.

'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
 To rein a steed and wield a brand.

I see him yet, the princely boy!

Not Ellen more my pride and joy;

I love him still, despite my wrongs,

By hasty wrath and slanderous tongues.

Oh seek the grace you well may find,
 Without a cause to mine combined.”

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode,
 The waving of his tartans broad,
 And darkened brow, where wounded pride
 With ire and disappointment vied,
 Seemed, by the torch's gloomy light,
 Like the ill Dæmon of the night,
 Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
 Upon the nighted pilgrim's way:

But, unrequited Love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
While eyes, that mocked at tears before,
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherished hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its checkered shroud,
While every sob — so mute were all —
Was heard distinctly through the hall.
The son's despair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
She rose, and to her side there came,
To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke -
As flashes flame through sable smoke,
Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
So the deep anguish of despair
Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:—
"Back, beardless boy!" he sternly said,
"Back, minion! hold'st thou thus at naught
The lesson I so lately taught?
This roof, the Douglas, and that maid
Thank thou for punishment delayed."
Eager as grayhound on his game,
Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
"Perish my name, if aught afford
Its chieftain safety, save his sword!"

Thus as they strove, their desperate hand
Griped to the dagger or the brand,
And death had been — but Douglas rose,
And thrust between the struggling foes
His giant strength: — “Chieftains, forego!
I hold the first who strikes, my foe.
Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!
What! is the Douglas fallen so far,
His daughter’s hand is deemed the spoil
Of such dishonorable broil!”
Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
And each upon his rival glared,
With foot advanced, and blade half bared.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
Margaret on Roderick’s mantle hung,
And Malcolm heard his Ellen’s scream,
As faltered through terrific dream.
Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
And veiled his wrath in scornful word.
“Rest safe till morning; pity ’twere
Such cheek should feel the midnight air!
Then may’st thou to James Stuart tell,
Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
Nor lackey, with his free-born clan,
The pageant pomp of earthly man.
More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
Thou canst our strength and passes show.
Malise, what ho?” — his henchman came;
“Give our safe conduct to the Græme.”
Young Malcolm answered, calm and bold,
“Fear nothing for thy favorite hold.

The spot, an angel deigned to grace,
Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place ;
Thy churlish courtesy for those
Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
As safe to me the mountain way
At midnight, as in blaze of day,
Though, with his boldest at his back,
Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.
Brave Douglas — lovely Ellen — nay,
Naught here of parting will I say.
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen,
So secret, but we meet again.
Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,"
He said, and left the sylvan bower.

Old Allan followed to the strand,
(Such was the Douglas's command,)
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
Dale, glen, and valley, down, and moor.
Much were the peril to the Græme,
From those who to the signal came ;
Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
Himself would row him to the strand.
He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broadsword rolled,
His ample plaid in tightened fold,
And stripped his limbs to such array
As best might suit the watery way.

Then spoke abrupt: — "Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!"

The minstrel's hand he kindly pressed,
"Oh! could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade:
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme,
Who loves the Chieftain of his name,
Not long shall honored Douglas dwell,
Like hunted stag, in mountain cell:
Nor, ere yon pride-swollen robber dare—
I may not give the rest to air!—
Tell Roderick Dhu, I owe him naught,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain side;"
Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steered him from the shore;
And Allan strained his anxious eye,
Far 'mid the lake his form to spy,
Darkening across each puny wave,
To which the moon her silver gave.
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD.

THE GATHERING.

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends store,
Of their strange ventures happ'd by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and withered of their force,
Wait, on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his
ceaseless course.

Yet live there still who can remember well,
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath, the signal knew;
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound,
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yelled the gathering
sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor
round.

The summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch-Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees,

And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy ;
The mountain shadows on her breast,
Were neither broken nor at rest ;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water lily to the light.
Her chalice reared of silver bright ;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn ;
The grey mist left the mountain side,
The torrent showed its glistening pride ;
Invisible in flecked sky,
The lark sent down her revelry :
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush ;
In answer cooed the cushat dove,
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught,
For such Antiquity had taught
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast ;—

Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Ben-venue,
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

A heap of withered boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
Brian the Hermit by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grisled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair;
His naked arms and legs, seamed o'er,
The scars of frantic penance bore.
That Monk, of savage form and face,
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
Not his the mien of Christian priest
But Druid's, from the grave released,
Whose hardened heart and eye might brook
On human sacrifice to look.
And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore
Mixed in the charms he muttered o'er;
The hallowed creed gave only worse
And deadlier emphasis of curse.
No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
His cave the pilgrim shunned with care,
The eager huntsman knew his bound,
And in mid chase called off his hound;

Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
The desert-dweller met his path,
He prayed, and signed the cross between,
While terror took devotion's mien.

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.
His mother watched a midnight fold,
Built deep within a dreary glen,
Where scattered lay the bones of men,
In some forgotten battle slain,
And bleached by drifting wind and rain.
It might have tamed a warrior's heart,
To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fettered there the hand,
Which once could burst an iron band;
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That bucklered heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The field-fare framed her lowly nest;
There the slow blind-worm left his slime
On the fleet limbs that mocked at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreathed with chaplet flushed and full,
For heath-bell, with her purple bloom,
Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
All night, in this sad glen the maid
Sate shrouded in her mantle's shade:
— She said, no shepherd sought her side,
No hunter's hand her snood untied,
Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
The virgin snood did Alice wear:
Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
Her maiden girdle all too short,

Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
Or holy church or blessed rite,
But locked her secret in her breast,
And died in travail, unconfessed.

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years ;
A moody and heart-broken boy,
Estranged from sympathy and joy,
Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
On his mysterious lineage flung.
Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
To wood and stream his hap to wail.
Till, frantic, he as truth received
What of his birth the crowd believed
And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
To meet and know his Phantom Sire !
In vain to soothe his wayward fate,
The cloister oped her pitying gate ;
In vain, the learning of the age
Unclasped the sable-lettered page ;
Even in its treasures he could find
Food for the fever of his mind.
Eager he read whatever tells
Of magic, cabala, and spells,
And every dark pursuit allied
To curious and presumptuous pride,
Till, with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung,
And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
And hid him from the haunts of men.

The desert gave him visions wild,
Such as might suit the Spectre's child.

Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
He watched the wheeling eddies boil,
Till, from their foam, his dazzled eyes
Beheld the river demon rise ;
The mountain mist took form and limb
Of noontide hag or goblin grim ;
The midnight wind came wild and dread,
Swelled with the voices of the dead ;
Far on the future battle-heath
His eye beheld the ranks of death :
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurled,
Shaped forth a disembodied world.
One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind ;
The only parent he could claim
Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream ;
Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,
Of charging steeds, careering fast
Along Benharrow's shingly side,
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride ;
The thunderbolt had split the pine —
All augured ill to Alpine's line.
He girt his loins, and came to show
The signals of impending wo,
And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

'Twas all prepared — and from the rock,
A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready blade

Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,
Down his clogged beard and shaggy limb,
Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
A slender crosslet framed with care.
A cubit's length in measure due ;
The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,
And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
The Cross, thus formed, he held on high,
With wasted hand and haggard eye,
And strange and mingled feelings woke,
While his anathema he spoke.

“Wo to the clansman, who shall view
This symbol of sepulchral yew,
Forgetful that its branches grew
Where weep the heavens their holiest dew
 On Alpine's dwelling low !
Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
But from his sires and kindred thrust,
Each clansman's execration just
 Shall doom him wrath and wo.”
He paused — the word the vassals took,
With forward step and fiery look,
On high their naked brands they shook,
Their clattering targets wildly strook ;
 And first, in murmur low,
Then, like the billow in his course,
That far to seaward finds his source,

And flings to shore his mustered force,
Burst, with loud roar, their answer hoarse,
 "Wo to the traitor, wo!"
Ben-an's gray scalp the accents knew,
The joyous wolf from covert drew,
The exulting eagle screamed afar —
They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

The shout was hushed on lake and fell,
The Monk resumed his muttered spell.
Dismal and low its accents came,
The while he scathed the Cross with flame;
And the few words that reached the air,
Although the holiest name was there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
But when he shook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:—
"Wo to the wretch, who fails to rear
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
His home, the refuge of his fear,
 A kindred fate shall know;
Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
 And infamy and wo!"
Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
 Of curses stammered slow;
Answering, with imprecation dread;
"Sunk be his home in embers red!

And cursed be the meanest shed
That e'er shall hide the houseless head

 We doom to want and wo!"

A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave!
And the gray pass where birches wave,
 On Beala-nam-bo.

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his laboring breath he drew,
While, with set teeth and clenched hand,

And eyes that glowed like fiery brand,
He meditated curse more dread,

And deadlier, on the clansman's head,
Who summoned to his Chieftain's aid,
The signal saw and disobeyed.

The crosslet's points of sparkling wood,
He quenched among the bubbling blood,

And as again the sign he reared,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard:

 " When flits this Cross from man to man,

 Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,

 Burst be the ear that fails to heed!

 Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!

 May ravens tear the careless eyes!

 Wolves make the coward heart their prize!

 As sinks the blood-stream in the earth,

 So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth!

 As dies in hissing gore the spark,

 Quench thou his light, Destruction dark,

 And be the grace to him denied,

 Bought by this sign to all beside!"

He ceased: no echo gave agen

The murmur of the deep Amen.

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
From Brian's hand the symbol took;
"Speed, Malise, speed!" he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave;
"The muster-place be Lanric mead —
Instant the time — speed, Malise, speed!"
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch-Katrine flew;
High stood the henchman on the prow;
So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launched the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had neared the mountain hill;
And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathoms wide,
When lightly bounded to the land,
The messenger of blood and brand.

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.
Speed, Malise speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest;
With short and springing footsteps pass
The trembling bog and false morass;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brakes like questing hound;
The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap:
Parched are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now;

Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!
The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
Pursu'st not maid through greenwood bough,
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace
With rivals in the mountain race;
But danger, death, and warrior deed
Are in thy course — Speed, Malise, speed!

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They poured each hardy tenant down.
Nor slacked the messenger his pace;
He showed the sign, he named the place,
And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamor and surprise behind.
The fisherman forsook the strand,
The swarthy smith took dirk and brand,
With changed cheer, the mower blithe
Left in half-cut swathe his scythe;
The herds without a keeper strayed,
The plough was in mid-furrow staid,
The falc'ner tossed his hawk away,
The hunter left the stag at bay;
Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rushed to arms;
So swept the tumult and affray
Along the margin of Achray.
Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!
The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
So stilly on thy bosom deep,

The lark's blithe carol from the cloud,
 Seems for the scene too gaily loud.
 Speed, Malise, speed! the lake is past,
 Duncraggan's huts appear at last,
 And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half seen,
 Half hidden in the copse so green;
 There may'st thou rest, thy labor done,
 Their Lord shall speed the signal on.
 As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
 The henchman shot him down the way.
 — What woful accents load the gale?
 The funeral yell, the female wail!
 A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
 A valiant warrior fights no more.
 Who, in the battle or the chase,
 At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—
 Within the hall, where torch's ray
 Supplies the excluded beams of day,
 Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
 And o'er him streams his widow's tear.
 His stripling son stands mournful by,
 His youngest weeps, but knows not why;
 The village maids and matrons round
 The dismal coronach resound.

CORANACH.

He is gone on the mountain,
 He is lost to the forest,
 Like a summer-dried fountain,
 When our need was the sorest.
 The font, re-appearing,
 From the rain-drops shall borrow,
 But to us comes no cheering,
 To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
Take the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory ;
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountam,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and for ever!

See Stumah, who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed—
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew,
Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread,
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
But headlong haste, or deadly fear,
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast:—unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall!
Before the dead man's bier he stood,
Held forth the Cross besmeared with blood!
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead ;
Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!"

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprang forth and seized the fatal sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her opened arms he flew,
Pressed on her lips a fond adieu,
"Alas!" she sobbed — "and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son!"
One look he cast upon the bier,
Dashed from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep, to clear his laboring breast,
And tossed aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt when freed,
First he essays his fire and speed,
He vanished, and o'er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear,
While yet his footsteps she could hear;
And when she marked the henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
"Kinsman," she said, "his race is run,
That should have sped thine errand on;
The oak has fallen — the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my son.
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan's head!
Let babes and women wail the dead."
Then weapon-clang, and martial call,
Resounded through the funeral hall,

While from the walls the attendant band
Snatched sword and targe, with hurried hand,
And short and flitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear
Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
But faded soon that borrowed force;
Gr'ef claimed his right, and tears their course.

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
Not rest nor pause young Angus knew;
The tear that gathered in his eye,
He left the mountain breeze to dry;
Until, where Teith's young waters roll,
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
That grazed the sable strath with green,
The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.
Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
But Angus paused not on the edge;
Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
Though reeled his sympathetic eye,
He dashed amid the torrent's roar;
His right hand high the crosslet bore,
His left the pole-axe grasped, to guide
And stay his footing in the tide.
He stumbled twice — the foam splashed high,
With hoarser swell the stream raced by;
And had he fallen — for ever there,
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
But still, as if in parting life,
Firmer he grasped the Cross of strife,

Until the opposing bank he gained,
And up the chapel pathway strained.

A blithesome rout, that morning tide,
Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride.
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
To Norman, heir of Armandave,
And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
The bridal now resumed their march.
In rude, but glad procession, came
Bonnetted sire and coif-clad dame :
And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
Which snooded maiden would not hear,
And children, that, unwitting why,
Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry ;
And minstrels, that in measures vied
Before the young and bonny bride,
Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step, and bashful hand,
She held the kerchief's snowy band ;
The gallant bridegroom, by her side,
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

Who meets them at the church-yard gate ?
The messenger of fear and fate !
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soiled he stood,
The fatal sign of fire and sword
Held forth, and spoke the appointed word :

“The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!”
And must he change so soon the hand,
Just linked to his by holy band,
For the fell cross of blood and brand?
And must the day, so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
Oh fatal doom!—it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine’s cause, her Chieftain’s trust,
Her summons dread, brooks no delay;
Stretch to the race—away! away!

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And, lingering, eyed his lovely bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak wo he might not stop to cheer;
Then, trusting not a second look,
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced till on the heath
Where Lubnaig’s lake supplies the Teith.
What in the racer’s bosom stirred?
The sickening pang of hope deferred,
And memory, with a torturing train
Of all his morning visions vain.
Mingled with love’s impatience, came
The manly thirst for martial fame;
The stormy joy of mountaineers,
Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
And zeal for clan and chieftain burning,
And hope, from well-fought field returning,
With war’s red honors on his crest,
To clasp his Mary to his breast.

Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
 Like fire from flint he glanced away,
 While high resolve, and feeling strong,
 Burst into voluntary song.

SONG.

The heath this night must be my bed,
 The bracken curtain for my head,
 My lullaby the warder's tread,
 Far, far from love and thee, Mary;
 To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
 My couch may be my bloody plaid,
 My vesper-song, thy wail, sweet maid!
 It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
 The grief that clouds thy lovely brow;
 I dare not think upon thy vow,
 And all it promised me, Mary.
 No fond regret must Norman know;
 When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
 His heart must be like bended bow,
 His foot like arrow free, Mary!

A time will come with feeling fraught!
 For, if I fall in battle fought,
 Thy hapless lover's dying thought,
 Shall be a thought on thee, Mary!
 And if returned from conquered foes,
 How blithely will the evening close,
 How sweet the linnet sing repose
 To my young bride and me, Mary'

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze,
Rushing in conflagration strong,
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below ;
Not faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.

The signal roused to martial coil
The sullen margin of Loch-Voil,
Waked still Loch-Doine, and to the source
Alarmed, Balvaig, thy swampy course ;
Thence southward turned its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name ;
From the gray sire, whose trembling hand
Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
Each valley, each sequestered glen,
Mustered its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height,
In Highland dale their streams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds, prompt for blows and blood ;
Each trained to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath, but by his Chieftain's hand,
No law, but Roderick Dhu's command.

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
Surveyed the skirts of Ben-venue,
And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
To view the frontiers of Menteith.
All backward came with news of truce ;
Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
No banner waved on Cardross gate,
On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
Nor scared the herons from Loch-Con ;
All seemed at peace. Now, wot ye why
The Chieftain, with such anxious eye,
Ere to the muster he repair,
This western frontier scanned with care? —
In Ben-venue's most darksome cleft,
A fair, though cruel pledge was left ;
For Douglas, to his promise true,
That morning from the isle withdrew,
And in a deep sequestered dell
Had sought a low and lonely cell.
By many a bard in Celtic tongue,
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung ;
A softer name the Saxon gave,
And called the grot the Goblin-cave.

It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawned like a gash on warrior's breast ;
Its trench had stayed full many a rock,
Hurled by primeval earthquake shock
From Ben-venue's gray summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,

They frowned incumbent o'er the spot,
And formed the rugged sylvan grot.
The oak and birch, with mingled shade,
At noontide there a twilight made,
Unless when short and sudden shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the solemn still,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with the lake,
A sullen sound would upward break,
With dashing hollow voice, that spoke
The incessant war of wave and rock.
Suspended cliffs, with hideous sway,
Seemed nodding o'er the cavern gray
From such a den the wolf had sprung,
In such the wild cat leaves her young;
Yet Douglas and his daughter fair,
Sought, for a space, their safety there.
Gray Superstition's whisper dread
Debarred the spot to vulgar tread;
For there, she said, did fays resort,
And satyrs hold their sylvan court,
By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

Now eve, with western shadows long,
Floated on Katrine bright and strong,
When Roderick, with a chosen few,
Repassed the heights of Ben-venue.
Above the Goblin-cave they go,
Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bc ,

The prompt retainers speed before,
To launch the shallop from the shore,
For cross Loch-Katrine lies his way
To view the passes of Achray,
And place his clansmen in array.
Yet lags the chief in musing mind,
Unwonted sight, his men behind.
A single page, to bear his sword,
Alone attended on his lord ;
The rest their way through thickets break,
And soon await him by the lake.
It was a fair and gallant sight,
To view them from the neighboring height,
By the low-levelled sunbeam's light ;
For strength and stature, from the clan
Each warrior was a chosen man,
As even afar might well be seen
By their proud step and martial mien.
Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
Their targets gleam, as by the boat
A wild and warlike group they stand,
That well became such mountain strand.

Their Chief, with step reluctant, still
Was lingering on the craggy hill,
Hard by where turned apart the road
To Douglas's obscure abode.
It was but with that dawning morn
That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn,
To drown his love in war's wild roar,
Nor think of Ellen Douglas more ;
But he who stems a stream with sand,
And fetters flame with flaxen band,

Has yet a harder task to prove —
By firm resolve to conquer love!
Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
Still hovering near his treasure lost;
For though his haughty heart deny
A parting meeting to his eye,
Still fondly strains his anxious ear
The accents of her voice to hear,
And inly did he curse the breeze
That waked to sound the rustling trees.
But, hark! what mingles in the strain?
It is the harp of Allan-bane,
That wakes its measures slow and high,
Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
What melting voice attends the strings:
'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings!

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

Ave Maria! maiden mild!

Listen to a maiden's prayer!
Thou canst hear though from the wild,
Thou canst save amidst despair.
Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banished, outcast, and reviled —
Maiden, hear a maiden's prayer!
Mother, hear a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must share,
Shall seem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.

The murky cavern's heavy air
 Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
 Then, Maiden, hear a maiden's prayer!
 Mother, list a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! Stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air,
 From this their wonted haunt exiled,
 Shall flee before thy presence fair.

We bow us to our lot of care,
 Beneath thy guidance reconciled;

Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer!
 And for a father hear a child!

Ave Maria!

Died on the harp the closing hymn —
 Unmoved in attitude and limb,
 As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord
 Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
 Until the page, with humble sign,
 Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
 Then, while his plaid he round him cast,
 "It is the last time — 'tis the last" —
 He muttered thrice — "the last time e'er
 That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!"
 It was a goading thought — his stride
 Hied hastier down the mountain side;
 Sullen he flung him in the boat,
 And instant cross the lake it shot.
 They landed in that silvery bay,
 And eastward held their hasty way,
 Till, with the latest beams of light,
 The band arrived on Lanrick height,

Where mustered in the vale below,
Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

A various scene the clansmen made,
Some sate, some stood, some slowly strayed;
But most, with mantles folded round,
Were couched to rest upon the ground,
Scarce to be known, by curious eye,
From the deep heather where they lie,
So well was matched the tartan screen
With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
Unless where, here and there, a blade,
Or lance's point, a glimmer made,
Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
But, when, advancing through the gloom,
They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
Three times returned the martial yell.
It died upon Bochastle's plain,
And Silence claimed her evening reign

CANTO FOURTH.

THE PROPHECY.

"THE rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
 And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears;
 The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
 And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.
 Oh wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
 I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
 Emblem of hope and love through future years!"
 Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
 What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung,
 Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.
 All while he stripped the wild-rose spray,
 His axe and bow beside him lay,
 For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood,
 A wakeful sentinel he stood.
 Hark!—on the rock a footstep rung,
 And instant to his arms he sprung.
 "Stand, or thou diest!—What, Malise?—soon
 Art thou returned from Braes of Doune.
 By thy keen step and glance I know,
 Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe."
 (For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
 On distant scout had Malise gone.)
 "Where sleeps the Chief?" the henchman said.
 "Apart, in yonder misty glade;
 To his lone couch I'll be your guide."
 Then called a slumberer by his side,

And stirred him with his slackened bow —
“Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
We seek the Chieftain; on the track,
Keep eagle watch till I come back.”

Together up the pass they sped:
“What of the foeman?” Norman said.
“Varying reports from near and far;
This certain — that a band of war
Has for two days been ready boune,
At prompt command, to march from Doune;
King James, the while, with princely powers,
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
Inured to bide such bitter bout,
The warrior’s plaid may bear it out;
But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
A shelter for thy bonny bride?”
“What! know ye not that Roderick’s care
To the lone isle hath caused repair
Each maid and matron of the clan,
And every child and aged man
Unfit for arms? and given his charge,
Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
Upon these lakes shall float at large,
But all beside the islet moor,
That such dear pledge may rest secure?”

“’Tis well advised — the Chieftain’s plan
Bespeaks the father of his clan.
But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
Apart from all his followers true?”

"It is, because last evening-tide
 Brian an augury hath tried,
 Of that dread kind which must not be
 Unless in dread extremity,
 The Taghairm called; by which, afar,
 Our sires foresaw the events of war.
 Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew ——"

MALISE.

"Ah! well the gallant brute I knew,
 The choicest of the prey we had,
 When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
 His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
 His red eye glowed like fiery spark;
 So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
 Sore did he cumber our retreat,
 And kept our stoutest kernes in awe,
 Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
 But steep and flinty was the road,
 And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
 And when we came to Dennan's Row,
 A child might scatheless stroke his brow."

NORMAN.

"That bull was slain; his reeking hide
 They stretched the cataract beside,
 Whose waters their wild tumult toss
 Adown the black and craggy boss
 Of that huge cliff, whose ample verge
 Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.

Couched on a shelf beneath its brink,
Close where the thundering torrents sink,
Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
Midst groan of rock, and roar of stream,
The wizard waits prophetic dream.
Nor distant rests the Chief:— but hush!
See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
The Hermit gains yon rock, and stands
To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
That hovers o'er a slaughtered host?
Or raven on the blasted oak,
That, watching while the deer is broke,
His morsel claims with sullen croak?"
"Peace! peace! to other than to me,
Thy words were evil augury;
But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
Not aught that, gleaned from heaven or hell,
Yon fiend-begotten monk can tell.
The Chieftain joins him, see—and now,
Together they descend the brow."

And, as they came with Alpine's Lord
The Hermit Monk held solemn word:
"Roderick! it is a fearful strife,
For man endowed with mortal life,
Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
Fell feverish pang and fainting chill,
Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance—
'Tis hard for such to view, unfurled,
The curtain of the future world.

Yet witness every quaking limb,
My sunken pulse, mine eyeballs dim,
My soul with harrowing anguish torn,
This for my Chieftain have I borne!
The shapes that sought my fearful couch,
An human tongue may ne'er avouch;
No mortal man — save he, who, bred
Between the living and the dead,
Is gifted beyond nature's law,
Had e'er survived to say he saw.
At length the fateful answer came,
In characters of living flame!
Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,
But borne and branded on my soul;
**WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE."**

"Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care!
Good is thine augury, and fair.
Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood,
But first our broadswords tasted blood.
A surer victim still I know,
Self-offered to the auspicious blow:
A spy hath sought my land this morn,
No eve shall witness his return!
My followers guard each pass's mouth,
To east, to westward, and to south;
Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
Has charge to lead his steps aside,
Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
He light on those shall bring him down.
But see, who comes his news to show!
Malise! what tidings of the foe?"

“ At Donne, o'er many a spear and glaive,
Two Barons proud their banners wave.
I saw the Moray's silver star,
And marked the sable pale of Mar.”
“ By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
I love to hear of worthy foes.
When move they on?” To-morrow's noon
Will see them here for battle boune.”
“ Then shall it see a meeting stern!—
But, for the place—say, couldst thou learn
Naught of the friendly clans of Earn?
Strengthened by them we well might bide
The battle on Benledi's side.
Thou couldst not?—well! Clan-Alpine's men
Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen;
Within Loch-Katrine's gorge we'll fight,
All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
Each for his hearth and household fire,
Father for child, and son for sire—
Lover for maid beloved!—but why—
Is it the breeze affects mine eye?
Or dost thou come, ill-omened tear!
A messenger of doubt or fear?
No! sooner may the Saxon lance
Unfix Benledi from his stance,
Than doubt or terror can pierce through
The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu;
'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.
Each to his post!—all know their charge.”
The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
The broadswords gleam, the banners dance,
Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.
I turn me from the martial roar,
And seek Coir-Uriskin once more,

Where is the Douglas? — he is gone;
And Ellen sits on the gray stone
Fast by the cave, and makes her moan;
While vainly Allan's words of cheer
Are poured on her unheeding ear.
"He will return — dear lady, trust! —
With joy return; he will — he must!
Well was it time to seek afar
Some refuge from impending war,
When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
Are cow'd by the approaching storm.
I saw their boats, with many a light,
Floating the live-long yesternight,
Shifting like flashes darted forth
By the red streamers of the north;
I marked at morn how close they ride,
Thick moored by the lone islet's side,
Like wild ducks couching in the fen,
When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
Since this rude race dare not abide
The peril on the mainland side,
Shall not thy noble father's care
Some safe retreat for thee prepare?"

"No, Allan, no! Pretext so kind
My wakeful terrors could not blind.
When in such tender tone, yet grave,
Douglas a parting blessing gave,
The tear that glistened in his eye
Drowned not his purpose fixed and high.
My soul, though feminine and weak,
Can image his; e'en as the lake,
Itself disturbed by slightest stroke,
Reflects the invulnerable rock.

He hears reports of battle rife,
 He deems himself the cause of strife.
 I saw him redden, when the theme
 Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream,
 Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
 Which I, thou said'st, about him wound.
 Think'st thou he trowed thine omen aught?
 Oh no! 'twas apprehensive thought
 For the kind youth — for Roderick too —
 (Let me be just) that friends so true;
 In danger both, and in our cause!
 Minstrel the Douglas dare not pause.
 Why else that solemn warning given,
 'If not on earth we meet in heaven?'
 Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
 If eve return him not again,
 Am I to hie and make me known?
 Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
 Buys his friends' safety with his own;
 He goes to do — what I had done,
 Had Douglas' daughter been his son!"

"Nay, lovely Ellen! — dearest, nay!
 If aught should his return delay,
 He only named yon holy fane
 As fitting place to meet again.
 Be sure he's safe; and for the Græme,
 Heaven's blessing on his gallant name;
 My visioned sight may yet prove true,
 Nor bode of ill to him or you.
 When did my gifted dream beguile?
 Think of the stranger at the isle,
 And think upon the harpings slow,
 That presaged this approaching wo!"

Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
 Believe it when it augurs cheer.
 Would we had left this dismal spot!
 Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot,
 Of such a wond'rous tale I know —
 Dear lady, change that look of wo!
 My heart was wont thy grief to cheer ——”

ELLEN.

“ Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
 But cannot stop the bursting tear.”
 The Minstrel tried his simple art,
 But distant far was Ellen's heart.

BALLAD.

ALICE BRAND.

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
 When the mavis and merle are singing,
 When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
 And the hunter's horn is ringing.

“ Oh Alice Brand! my native land
 Is lost for love of you;
 And we must hold by wood and wold,
 As outlaws wont to do.

“ Oh Alice! 'twas all for thy locks so bright,
 And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue,
 That on the night of our luckless flight,
 Thy brother bold I slew.

“Now must I teach to hew the beech,
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

“And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughtered deer,
To keep the cold away.”

“Oh Richard! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And Fortune sped the lance.

“If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we'll say, is the russet gray,
As gay the forest green.

“And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.”

BALLAD—CONTINUED.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry in good greenwood,
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beach's pride, and the oak's brown side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
 Who won'd within the hill —
 Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
 His voice was ghostly shrill.

“Why sounds yon stroke on beach and oak,
 Our moonlight circle's screen?
 Or who comes here to chase the deer,
 Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
 Or who may dare on wold to wear
 The fairy's fatal green?”

“Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
 For thou wert christened man;
 For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
 For muttered word or ban.

“Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,
 The curse of the sleepless eye;
 Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
 Nor yet find leave to die.”

BALLAD — CONTINUED.

’Tis merry, ’tis merry, in good greenwood,
 Though the birds have stilled their singing;
 The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
 And Richard is faggots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf
 Before Lord Richard stands,
 And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
 “I fear not sign,” quoth the grisly elf,
 “That is made with bloody hands.”

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
That woman void of fear—
“And if there’s blood upon his hand,
’Tis but the blood of deer.”

“Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood,
It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood,
The blood of Ethert Brand.”

Then forward stepped she, Alice Brand,
And made the holy sign—
“And if there’s blood on Richard’s hand,
A spotless hand is mine.

“And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
By him whom Demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself?
And what thine errand here?”

BALLAD — CONTINUED.

“’Tis merry, ’tis merry, in Fairy-land,
When fairy birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their monarch’s side,
With bit and bridle ringing:

“And gaily shines the Fairy-land—
But all is glistening show,
Like the idle gleam that December’s beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

“And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape,
Who now like knight and lady seem,
And now like dwarf and ape.

“It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy king has power,
That I sank down in a sinful fray,
And, ’twixt life and death, was snatched away
To the joyless Elfin bower.

“But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mold
As fair a form as thine.”

She crossed him once — she crossed him twice —
That lady was so brave ;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold ;
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mold,
Her brother, Ethert Brand !

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
But merrier were they in Dunfermline gray,
When all the bells were ringing.

Just as the minstrel's sounds were staid,
A stranger climbed the steepy glade ;

His martial step, his stately mien,
 His hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
 His eagle glance remembrance claims —
 'Tis Snowdoun's Knight — 'tis James Fitz-
 James!

Ellen beheld, as in a dream,
 Then starting, scarce suppressed a scream:
 "Oh stranger! in such hour of fear,
 What evil hap has brought thee here?"
 "An evil hap how can it be,
 That bids me look again on thee?
 By promise bound, my former guide
 Met me betimes this morning tide,
 And marshalled, over bank and bourne,
 The happy path of my return."
 "The happy path! — what! said he naught
 Of war, of battle to be fought,
 Of guarded pass?" — "No, by my faith!
 Nor saw I aught could augur scathe."
 "Oh haste thee Allan, to the kern
 — Yonder his tartans I discern;
 Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
 That he will guide the stranger sure! —
 What prompted thee, unhappy man?
 The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
 Had not been bribed by love or fear,
 Unknown to him, to guide thee here."

"Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
 Since it is worthy care from thee;
 Yet life I hold but idle breath,
 When love or honor's weighed with death.
 Then let me profit by my chance,
 And speak my purpose bold at once

I come to bear thee from a wild,
Where ne'er before such blossom smiled;
By this soft hand to lead thee far
From frantic scenes of feud and war.
Near Bochastle my horses wait;
They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
I'll guard thee like a tender flower ——”
“Oh! hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female art
To say I do not read thy heart;
Too much, before, my selfish ear
Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track;
And how, oh how can I atone
The wreck my vanity brought on!
One way remains — I'll tell him all —
Yes, struggling bosom, forth it shall!
Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
But first — my father is a man
Outlawed and exiled, under ban;
The price of blood is on his head,
With me 'twere infamy to wed.
Still would'st thou speak? — then hear the truth!
Fitz-James, there is a noble youth —
If yet he is! — exposed for me
And mine to dread extremity —
Thou hast the secret of my heart;
Forgive, be generous, and depart.”

Fitz-James knew every wily train
A lady's fickle heart to gain,
But here he knew and felt them vain.

There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
To give her steadfast speech the lie;
In maiden confidence she stood,
Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
And told her love with such a sigh
Of deep and hopeless agony,
As death had sealed her Malcolm's doom,
And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled sympathy.
He proffered to attend her side,
As brother would a sister guide.
"Oh! little knowest thou Roderick's heart!
Safer for both we go apart.
Oh haste thee, and from Allan learn,
If thou may'st trust yon wily kern."
With hand upon his forehead laid,
The conflict of his mind to shade,
A parting step or two he made;
Then, as some thought had crossed his brain,
He paused, and turned, and came again.

"Hear, lady, yet, a parting word! —
It chanced in fight that my poor sword
Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
And bade, when I had boon to crave,
To bring it back, and boldly claim
The recompense that I would name.
Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
But one who lives by lance and sword,
Whose castle is his helm and shield,
His lordship, the embattled field.

What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of state nor land?
Ellen, thy hand — the ring is thine;
Each guard and usher knows the sign.
Seek thou the king without delay;
This signet shall secure thy way;
And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
As ransom of his pledge to me."
He placed the golden circlet on,
Paused — kissed her hand — and then was gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He joined his guide, and wending down
The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their way,
That joins Loch-Katrine to Achray.

All in the Trosachs' glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
Sudden his guide whooped loud and high —
"Murdoch! was that a signal cry?"
He stammered forth — "I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare."
He looked — he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed: — "Ah! gallant gray!
For thee — for me perchance — 'twere well
We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' dell.
Murdoch, move first — but silently;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die."
Jealous and sullen on they fared,
Each silent, each upon his guard.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a precipice's edge,

When lo! a wasted female form,
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
In tattered weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
Seemed naught to mark, yet all to spy.
Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom;
With gesture wild she waved a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from dusky wing
Such spoils her desperate foot had sought,
Where scarce was footing for the goat.
The tartan plaid she first descried,
And shrieked, till all the rocks replied;
As loud she laughed when near they drew,
For then the Lowland garb she knew;
And then her hands she wildly wrung,
And then she wept, and then she sung.
She sung! — the voice, in better time,
Perchance to harp or lute might chime;
And now, though strained and roughened, still
Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

SONG.

“They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
They say my brain is warped and wrung —
I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
But were I now where Allan glides,
Or heard my native Devan’s tides,
So sweetly would I rest and pray
That heaven would close my wintery day!

“’Twas thus my hair they bade me braid,
They bade me to the church repair;
It was my bridal morn, they said,
And my true-love would meet me there,
But wo betide the cruel guile,
That drowned in blood the morning smile!
And wo betide the fairy dream!
I only waked to sob and scream.”

“Who is this maid? what means her lay?
She hovers o’er the hollow way,
And flutters wide her mantle gray,
As the lone heron spreads his wing,
By twilight, o’er a haunted spring.”
“’Tis Blanche of Devan,” Murdoch said,
“A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
Ta’en on the morn she was a bride,
When Roderick forayed Devan-side.
The gay bridegroom resistance made,
And felt our Chief’s unconquered blade.
I marvel she is now at large,
But oft she ’scapes from Maudlin’s charge;
Hence, brain-sick fool!” He raised his bow:
“Now, if thou strik’st her but one blow,
I’ll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitched a bar.”
“Thanks, champion, thanks!” the Maniac cried,
And pressed her to Fitz-James’s side.
“See the gray pennons I prepare,
To seek my true-love through the air!
I will not lend that savage groom,
To break his fall, one downy plume!
No! — deep amid disjointed stones,
The wolves shall batten on his bones,

And then shall his detested plaid,
By bush and briar in mid-air staid,
Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet signal for their revelry."

"Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still."
"Oh! thou look'st kindly, and I will.
Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green;
And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

For oh my sweet William was forester true,
He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
And so blithely he trilled the Lowland lay!

It was not that I meant to tell...
But thou art wise, and guessest well."
Then, in a low and broken tone,
And hurried note, the song went on.
Still on the Clansman, fearfully,
She fixed her apprehensive eye;
Then turned it on the Knight, and then
Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

"The toils are pitched, and the stakes are set,
Ever sing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live so cheerily.

“It was a stag, a stag of ten,
Bearing his branches sturdily;
He came stately down the glen,
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

“It was there he met with a wounded doe
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warned him of the toils below,
Oh so faithfully, faithfully!

“He had an eye, and he could heed,
Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed —
Hunters watch so narrowly.”

Fitz-James's mind was passion-tossed,
When Ellen's hints and fears were lost,
But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
And Blanche's song conviction brought.
Not like a stag that spies the snare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
“Disclose thy treachery or die!”
Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew;
The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
And thrilled in Blanche's faded breast.
Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
For ne'er had Alpine's son such need!
With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
The fierce avenger is behind!
Fate judges of the rapid strife —
The forfeit, death — the prize is life.

Thy kindred ambush lies before,
Close couched upon the heathery moor ;
Them couldst thou reach — it may not be —
Thine ambushed kin thou ne'er shalt see,
The fiery Saxon gains on thee!
Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
As lightning strikes the pine to dust ;
With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain,
Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fall'n, with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die ;
Then slowly wended back his way
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

She sate beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee ;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laughed.
Her wreath of broom and feathers gray,
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to staunch the life-stream tried —
"Stranger, it is in vain!" she cried ;
"This hour of death has given me more
Of reason's power than years before ;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye,
That thou wert mine avenger born.
Seest thou this tress? Oh! still I've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimmed its shine.

I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
 Nor from what guiltless victim's head —
 My brain would turn! — but it shall wave
 Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
 Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
 And thou will bring it me again.
 I waver still! — Oh God! more bright
 Let Reason beam her parting light! —
 Oh! by thy knighthood's honored sign,
 And for thy life preserved by mine,
 When thou shalt see a darksome man,
 Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's clan,
 With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
 And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
 Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
 And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong! —
 They watch for thee by pass and fell...
 Avoid the path... Oh God!... farewell!"

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James,
 Fast poured his eye at pity's claims;
 And now, with mingled grief and ire,
 He saw the murdered maid expire,
 "God, in my need, be my relief,
 As I wreak this on yonder Chief!" —
 A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
 He blended with her bridegroom's hair;
 The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
 And placed it on his bonnet side:
 "By Him whose word is truth! I swear
 No other favor will I wear,
 Till this sad token I embrue
 In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!
 But hark! what means yon faint halloo?

The chase is up—but they shall know
The stag at bay's a dangerous foe."
Barred from the known but guarded way,
Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
And oft must change his desperate track,
By stream and precipice turned back.
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food and loss of strength,
He couched him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils o'er:—
"Of all my rash adventures past,
This frantic feat will prove the last!
Who e'er so mad but might have guessed,
That all this Highland hornet's nest
Would muster up in swarms so soon
As e'er they heard of bands at Doune?
Like bloodhounds now they search me out—
Hark, to the whistle and the shout!
If farther through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe;
I'll couch me here till evening gray,
Then darkling try my dangerous way."

The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapped in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell;
Enough remains of glimmering light
To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
Yet not enough from far to show
His figure to the watchful foe.
With cautious step, and ear awake,
He climbs the crag and threads the brake;

And not the summer solstice, there,
Tempered the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze that swept the wold,
Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold.
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famished and chilled, through ways unknown,
Tangled and steep, he journeyed on ;
Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,
A watch-fire close before him burned.

Beside its embers red and clear,
Basked, in his plaid, a mountaineer ;
And up he sprung, with sword in hand —
"Thy name and purpose ! Saxon, stand !"
"A stranger." "What dost thou require !"
"Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chilled my limbs with frost."
"Art thou a friend to Roderick !" "No."
"Thou darrest not call thyself his foe ?"
"I dare ! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand."
"Bold words ! — but, though the beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim,
Though space and law the stag we lend,
Ere hounds we slip, or bow we bend,
Who ever recked, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapped or slain ?
Thus, treacherous scouts — yet sure they lie,
Who say thou cam'st a secret spy !"
"They do, by Heaven ! Come Roderick Dhu,
And of his clan the boldest two,
And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their crest."

“If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear’st the belt and spur of Knight.”
“Then, by these tokens may’st thou know,
Each proud oppressor’s mortal foe.”
“Enough, enough; sit down and share
A soldier’s couch, a soldier’s fare.”

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
The hardened flesh of mountain deer;
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
He tended him like welcome guest,
Then thus his further speech addressed:
“Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
A clansman born, a kinsman true;
Each word against his honor spoke,
Demands of me avenging stroke;
Yet more — upon thy fate, ’tis said,
A mighty augury is laid.
It rests with me to wind my horn,
Thou art with numbers overborne;
It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
But not for clan nor kindred’s cause,
Will I depart from honor’s laws:
To assail a wearied man were shame,
A stranger is a holy name;
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
In vain he never must require.
Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way,
O’er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
Till past Clan-Alpine’s outmost guard,

As far as Coilantogle's ford —
From thence thy warrant is thy sword."
"I take thy courtesy, by Heaven,
As freely as 'tis nobly given!"
"Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."
With that he shook the gathered heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
And the brave foemen, side by side,
Lay peaceful down like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.



CANTO FIFTH.

THE COMBAT.

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
And lights the fearful path on mountain side;
Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow
of war.

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled sky,
Muttered their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael around him threw,
His graceful plaid of varied hue,
And, true to promise, led the way,
By thicket green and mountain gray.
A wildering path! they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales between that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gained not the length of horseman's lance.
'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft, that, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew —
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

At length they came where, stern and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
Ever the hollow path twined on,
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;

An hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host,
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,
It held the copse in rivalry.
But where the lake slept deep and still,
Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill,
And oft both path and hill were torn,
Where wintry torrent down had borne,
And heaped upon the cumbered land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And asked Fitz-James, by what strange cause.
He sought these wilds, traversed by few,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu?

“ Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt, and by my side ;
Yet sooth to tell,” the Saxon said,
“ I dreamed not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days since, I came
Bewildered in pursuit of game,
All seemed as peaceful and as still,
As the mist slumbering on yon hill ;
Thy dangerous chief was then afar,
Nor soon expected back from war.
Thus said, at least, my mountain guide,
Though deep, perchance, the villain lied.”

“Yet why a second venture try?”
“A warrior thou, and ask me why?
Moves our free course by such fixed cause,
As gives the poor mechanic laws?
Enough, I sought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day;
Slight cause will then suffice to guide
A knight’s free footsteps far and wide,
A falcon flown, a grayhound strayed,
The merry glance of mountain maid;
Or, if a path be dangerous known,
The danger’s self is lure alone.”

“Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;
Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
Say, heard ye naught of Lowland war,
Against Clan-Alpine raised by Mar?”
“No, by my word; of bands prepared
To guard King James’s sports I heard;
Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
This muster of the mountaineer,
Their pennons will abroad be flung,
Which else in Doune had peaceful hung.”
“Free be they flung!—for we were loth
Their silken folds should feast the moth.
Free be they flung!—as free shall wave
Clan-Alpine’s pine in banner brave.
But, Stranger, peaceful since you came,
Bewildered in the mountain game,
Whence the bold boast by which you show
Vich-Alpine’s vowed and mortal foe?”—
“Warrior, but yester-morn I knew
Naught of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,

Save as an outlawed desperate man,
The chief of a rebellious clan,
Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight;
Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and loyal heart."

Wrotful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lowered the Clansman's sable scowl,
A space he paused, then sternly said —
"And heard'st thou why he drew his blade?
Heard'st thou that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
What reck'd the Chieftain, if he stood
On Highland heath or Holy-Rood?
He rights such wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven."
"Still was it outrage;—yet, 'tis true,
Not then claimed sovereignty his due;
While Albany, with feeble hand,
Held borrowed truncheon of command.
The young king, mew'd in Sterling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruined Lowland swain
His herds and harvest reared in vain—
Methinks a soul like thine should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne."

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answered with disdainful smile—

“Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I marked thee send delighted eye,
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pasture green,
With gentle slopes and groves between:—
These fertile plains, that softened vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o’er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread,
For fattened steer or household bread,
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply—
‘To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.’
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think’st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?
Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain;
While, of ten thousand herds, there strays
But one along yon river’s maze—
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share.
Where live the mountain chiefs, who hold
That plundering Lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cause ’gainst Roderick Dhu.”

Answered Fitz-James — “ And, if I sought,
Think'st thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path waylaid,
My life given o'er to ambuscade ? ”

“ As of a meed to rashness due :
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true —
I seek my hound or falcon strayed,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid —
Free hadst thou been to come and go ;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
Save to fulfil an augury.”

“ Well, let it pass ; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow. .
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride ;
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace ; but when I come agen,
I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band.”

“ Have then thy wish ! ” — he whistled shrill,
And he was answered from the hill ;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets, and spears, and bended bows ;

On right, on left, above, below,
Sprang up at once the lurking foe ;
From shingles gray their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife.
That whistle garrisoned the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood and still.
Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fixed his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James — "How say'st thou now ?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true ;
And, Saxon — I am Roderick Dhu !"

Fitz-James was brave : — though to his heart
The life-blood thrilled with sudden start ;
He manned himself with dauntless air,
Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before ; —

“Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I!”
Sir Roderick marked — and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood — then waved his hand;
Down sank the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanished where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sank brand and spear, and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;
It seemed as if their mother Earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind’s last breath had tossed in air
Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair —
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide;
The sun’s last glance was glinted back,
From spear and glaiive, from targe and jack
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green and cold gray stone.

Fitz-James looked round — yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;
Such apparitions well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
And to his look the Chief replied,
“Fear naught — nay, that I need not say —
But — doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest; — I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle ford:

Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on;—I only meant
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.”
They moved:—I said Fitz-James was brave
As ever knight that belted glaive;
Yet dare not say, that now his blood
Kept on its wont and tempered flood,
As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,
Which yet, by fearful proof, was rife
With lances, that to take his life
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonored and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanished guardians of the ground,
And still from copse and heather deep,
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain,
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free, till far behind
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush, nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reached that torrent's sounding shore,

Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.
And here his course the Chieftain staid,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said :
“ Bold Saxon ! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine’s outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A chieftain’s vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here, all vantageless I stand,
Armed, like thyself, with single brand ;
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword.”

The Saxon paused : — I ne’er delayed,
When foeman bade me draw my blade ;
Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death ;
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well reserved : —
Can naught but blood our feud atone ?
Are there no means ? ” — “ No, Stranger, none !
And hear — to fire thy flagging zeal —
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel ;
For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead :

‘Who spills the foremost foeman’s life,
His party conquers in the strife.’”

“Then, by my word,” the Saxon said,
“The riddle is already read.

Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff—
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate has solved her prophecy,
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James, at Stirling, let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favor free,
I plight mine honor, oath, and word,
That, to thy native strength restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand,
That aids thee now to guard thy land.”

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick’s eye--

“Soars thy presumption, then, so high,

Because a wretched kern ye slew,

Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?

He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!

Thou add’st but fuel to my hate—

My clansman’s blood demands revenge.

Not yet prepared? By heaven, I change

My thought, and hold thy valor light

As that of some vain carpet-knight,

Who ill deserved my courteous care,

And whose best boast is but to wear

A braid of his fair lady’s hair.”

“I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!

It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;

For I have sworn this braid to stain

In the best blood that warms thy vein.

Now, truce, farewell! and ruth, be gone! —
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast
Would fearful odds against thee cast.
But fear not — doubt not — which thou wilt —
We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.”
Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
Each looked to sun, and stream, and plain,
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dashed aside;
For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.
He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
While less expert, though stronger far,
The Gael maintained unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon sword drank blood —
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And showered his blows like wintry rain,
And, as firm rock, a castle-roof,
Against the winter shower is proof,

The foe, invulnerable still,
Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
And, backwards borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

“Now, yield thee, or, by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!”
“Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield who fears to die.”
Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung,
Received, but recked not of a wound,
And locked his arms his foeman round.
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel
Through bars of brass and triple steel!
They tug, they strain!—down, down, they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below!
The Chieftain's gripe his throat compressed.
His knee was planted in his breast;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!
But hate and fury ill supplied
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game;

For, while the dagger gleamed on high,
Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye,
Down came the blow! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

He faltered thanks to heaven for life,
Redeemed, unhopèd, from desperate strife;
Next on his foe his look he cast,
Whose every gasp appeared his last;
In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid,
"Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid;
Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that Faith and Valor give."
With that he blew a bugle-note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonnetted, and by the wave
Sate down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead,
By loosened rein, a saddled steed;
Each onward held his headlong course,
And by Fitz-James reined up his horse,
With wonder viewed the bloody spot—
"Exclaim not gallants! question not.
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight,

Let the gray palfrey bear his weight,
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight;
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high; I must be boune
To see the archer-game at noon;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.
De Vaux and Herries, follow me!

“Stand, Bayard, stand!” the steed obeyed,
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye, and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turned on the horse his armed heel,
And stirred his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air,
The rider sate erect and fair,
Then, like a bolt, from steel cross-bow
Forth launched, along the plain they go.
They dashed that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie’s hill they flew;
Still at the gallop pricked the knight,
His merry-men followed as they might.
Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
Torry and Lendrick now are past,
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;

Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre;
They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Keir;
They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,
Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground,
With splash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-forth.
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Gray Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career looked down.

As up the flinty path they strained,
Sudden his steed the leader reined;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung:—
"Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman gray,
Who townward holds the rocky way,
Of stature tall and poor array?
Mark'st thou the firm, yet active stride,
With which he scales the mountain side?
Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom?"
"No, by my word;— a burly groom
He seems, who in the field or chase
A Baron's train would nobly grace."
"Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply
And jealousy, no sharper eye?
Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
That stately form and step I knew;
Like form in Scotland is not seen,
Treads not such step on Scottish green.
'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
The uncle of the banished Earl.

Away, away, to court, to show
The near approach of dreaded foe :
The King must stand upon his guard ;
Douglas and he must meet prepared.”
Then right hand wheeled their steeds, and
straight
They won the castle's postern gate.

The Douglas, who had bent his way
From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey gray,
Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself :—
“ Yes ! all is true my fears could frame ;
A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
The vengeance of the royal steel.
I, only I, can ward their fate—
God grant the ransom come not late !
The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of heaven ;—
Be pardoned one repining tear !
For He who gave her, knows how dear,
How excellent—but that is by,
And now my business is to die.
Ye towers ! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled,
And thou, oh sad and fatal mound !
That oft has heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand—
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom !
But hark ! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel ?

And see! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what maskers meet!
Banner, and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day,
James will be there — he loves such show,
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter shivers spear.
I'll follow to the Castle-park,
And play my prize — King James shall mark,
If age has tamed these sinews stark,
Whose force so oft, in happier days,
His boyish wonder loved to praise."

The Castle gates were open flung,
The quivering draw-bridge rocked and rung,
And echoed loud the flinty street
Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
As slowly down the deep descent
Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.
And ever James was bending low,
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame,
Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame,
And well the simperer might be vain —
He chose the fairest of the train.
Gravely he greets each city sire,
Commends each pageant's quaint attire,

Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,
"Long live the Commons' King, King James!"
Behind the King thronged peer and knight,
And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
Of the steep street and crowded way.
But in the train you might discern
Dark lowering brow and visage stern:
Then nobles mourned their pride restrained,
And the mean burghers' joys disdained;
And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banished man,
There thought upon their own gray tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deemed themselves a shameful part
Of pageant, which they cursed in heart.
Now in the Castle-park, drew out
Their checkered bands the joyous route.
There morricers, with bell at heel,
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand
Bold Robin Hood and all his band—
Friar Tuck with quarter-staff and cowl,
Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their skill.
The Douglas bent a bow of might—
His first shaft centered in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.

From the King's hand must Douglas take
A silver dart, the archers, stake,
Fondly he watched, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympathy —
No kind emotion made reply!
Indifferent as to archer wight,
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o'er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes,
Nor called in vain; for Douglas came.
— For life, is Hugh of Lambert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades bear
Prize of the wrestling match, the King
To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of winter dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast
His struggling soul his words suppressed:
Indignant, then, he turned him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.
When each his utmost strength had shown,
The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sky,
A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still, in Stirling's royal park,
The gray-haired sires who know the past,
To strangers point the Douglas-cast,

And moralize on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

The vale with loud applauses rang,
The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang ;
The King, with look unmoved, bestowed
A purse well filled with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now, with anxious wonder, scan,
And sharper glance, the dark gray man ;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas' blood belong :
The old men marked, and shook the head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And winked aside, and told each son
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.
The women praised his stately form,
Though wrecked by many a winter's storm ;
The youth, with awe and wonder, saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmurs rose to clamors loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King,
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or called the banished man to mind ;
No, not from those who, at the chase,
Once held his side the honored place,
Begirt his board, and, in the field,
Found safety underneath his shield ;

For he, whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers known!

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
Two favorite grayhounds should pull down,
That vension free, and Bourdeaux wine,
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra — whom from Douglas' side
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide —
The fleetest hound in all the North,
Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds mid-way,
And dashing on the antlered prey,
Sank her sharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and, with his leash unbound,
In anger struck the noble hound.
The Douglas had endured, that morn,
The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed;
And oft would Ellen, Lufra's neck,
In maiden glee, with garlands deck;
They were such playmates, that with name
Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
His stifled wrath is brimming high,
In darkened brow and flashing eye;

As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride ;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

Then clamored loud the royal train,
And brandished swords and staves amain ;
But stern the Baron's warning — " Back !
Back on your lives, ye menial pack !
Beware the Douglas. Yes ! behold,
King James, the Douglas, doomed of old,
And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war.
A willing victim, now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends."
" Thus is my clemency repaid ?
Presumptuous lord !" the Monarch said ;
" Of thy mis-proud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know :
But shall a Monarch's presence brook
Injurious blow, and haughty look ?
What ho ! the Captain of our Guard !
Give the offender fitting ward.
Break off the sports !" for tumult rose,
And yeoman 'gan to bend their bows —
" Break off the sports !" he said, and frowned,
" And bid our horseman clear the ground."

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marred the fair form of festal day.

The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
Repelled by threats and insult loud ;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek,
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep,
While on their rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar.
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The commons rise against the law,
And to the leading soldier said,
"Sir John of Hyndford! 'twas my blade
That knighthood on thy shoulder laid ;
For that good deed, permit me, then,
A word with these misguided men.

"Hear, gentle friends! ere yet, for me,
Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honor, and my cause,
I tender free to Scotland's laws.
Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire?
Or, if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,
My sense of public weal so low,
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those chords of love I should unbind,
Which knit my country and my kind?
Oh no! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not soothe my captive hour,

To know those spears our foes should dread,
For me in kindred gore are red ;
To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
For me, that mother wails her son :
For me, that widow's mate expires,
For me, that orphans weep their sires,
That patriots mourn insulted laws,
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
Oh let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!"

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed
For blessings on his generous head,
Who for his country felt alone,
Who prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men, upon the verge of life,
Blessed him who staid the civil strife,
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted chief to spy,
Triumphant over wrong and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire :
Even the rough soldier's heart was moved ;
As if behind some bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping dead,
The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the castle's battled verge,
With sighs, resigned his honored charge.

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart,
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his train.

“Oh Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changling crowd, this common fool;
Hear'st thou,” he said, “the loud acclaim
With which they shout the Douglas name?
With like acclaim, the vulgar throat
Strained for King James their morning note;
With like acclaim they hailed the day
When first I broke the Douglas' sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet,
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?
Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
Thou many-headed monster-thing,
Oh who could wish to be thy king!

“But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar —
What from our cousin, John of Mar?”
“He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound
Within the safe and guarded ground:
For some foul purpose yet unknown —
Most sure for evil to the throne —
The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Has summoned his rebellious crew;
'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand arrayed.
The Earl of Mar, this morn, from Doune,
To break their muster marched, and soon

Your grace will hear of battle fought ;
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not ride."

"Thou warn'st me I have done amiss,
I should have earlier looked to this :
I lost it in this bustling day.
Retrace with speed thy former way ;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
The best of mine shall be thy meed,
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war !
Roderick, this morn, in single fight,
Was made our prisoner by a knight,
And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
Bear Mar our message, Braco, fly."
He turned his steed — "My liege, I hie,
Yet, ere I cross this lily lawn,
I fear the broadswords will be drawn."
The turf the flying courser spurned,
And to his towers the King returned.

Ill with King James's mood that day
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay ;
Soon was dismissed the courtly throng,
And soon cut short the festal song.
Nor less upon the saddened town
The evening sank in sorrow down ;

The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumored feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms: the Douglas too,
They mourned him pent within the hold
Where stout Earl William was of old;
And there his word the speaker staid,
And finger on his lip he laid,
Or pointed to his dagger blade.
But jaded horsemen from the west,
At evening to the castle pressed;
And busy talkers said they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore:
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumor shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

CANTO SIXTH.

THE GUARD-ROOM.

THE sun, awakening, through the smoky air
 Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
 Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
 Of sinful man the sad inheritance ;
 Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
 Scaring the prowling robber to his den ;
 Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
 And warning student pale to leave his pen,
 And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.

What various scenes, and oh ! what scenes of wo,
 Are witnessed by that red and struggling beam !
 The fevered patient, from his pallet low,
 Through crowded hospital beholds it stream ;
 The ruined maiden trembles at its gleam,
 The debtor wakes to thoughts of gyve and jail,
 The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream ;
 The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
 Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble
 wail.

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
 With soldier-step and weapon-clang,
 While drums, with rolling note, foretell
 Relief to weary sentinel.
 Through narrow loop and casement barred,
 The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,

And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deadened the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blackened stone,
And showed wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deformed with beard and scar,
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fevered with the stern debauch;
For the oak table's massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drained, and cups o'erthrown,
Showed in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench;
Some labored still their thirst to quench;
Some, chilled with watching, spread their hands
O'er the huge chimney's dying brands,
While round them, or beside them flung,
At every step their harness rung.

These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor owned the patriarchal claim
Of chieftain in their leaders name;
Adventurers they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which they loved.
There the Italian's clouded face,
The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace;
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain air,
The Fleming there despised the soil
That paid so ill the laborer's toil;
Their rolls showed French and German name,
And merry England's exiles came,

To share, with ill-concealed disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well trained to wield
The heavy halbert, brand, and shield;
In camps, licentious, wild, and bold;
In pillage, fierce and uncontrolled;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch-Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their speech, and, mid their words,
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
Nor sank their tone to spare the ear
Of wounded comrades groaning near,
Whose mangled limbs, and bodies gored,
Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighboring to the Court of Guard,
Their prayers and feverish wails were heard;—
Sad burdened to the ruffian joke,
And savage oath by fury spoke!—
At length upstarted John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
A stranger to respect or fear,
In peace a chaser of the deer,
In host a hardy mutineer,
But still the boldest of the crew,
When deed of danger was to do.
He grieved, that day, their games cut short,
And marred the dicers' brawling sport,
And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!
And, while a merry catch I trol,
Let each the buxom chorus bear,
Like brethren of the brand and spear."

SOLDIER'S SONG.

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule
Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black jack,
And seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
Drink upsees out, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip, —
Says that Belzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker,
Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches — and why should he not?
For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
Who infringe the domains of our good mother Church;
Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

The warder's challenge heard without,
Stayed in mid roar the merry shout.
A soldier to the portal went —
"Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
And, beat for jubilee the drum!
A maid and minstrel with him come.
Bertram, a Fleming, gray and scarred,
Was entering now the Court of Guard,

A harper with him, and, in plaid
All muffled close, a mountain maid,
Who backward shrank, to 'scape the view
Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
"What news?" they roared:—"I only know
From noon till eve we fought with foe,
As wild and as untameable
As the rude mountains where they dwell.
On both sides store of blood is lost,
Not much success can either boast."
"But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
As theirs must need reward thy toil.
Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp,
Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band."

"No, comrade;—no such fortune mine.
After the fight, these sought our line,
That aged harper and the girl,
And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
And bring them hitherward with speed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm."
"Hear ye his boast!" cried John of Brent,
Ever to strife and jangling bent;
"Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?
I'll have my share howe'er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."
Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,

Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
But Ellen boldly stepped between,
And dropped at once the tartan screen;
So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May, through summer tears.
The savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abashed and tamed,
Stood half-admiring, half-ashamed.

Boldly she spoke — “Soldiers, attend!
My father was the soldier’s friend;
Cheered him in camps, in marches led,
And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant, or the strong,
Should exile’s daughter suffer wrong.”
Answered De Brent, most forward still
In every feat of good or ill,
“I shame me of the part I played;
And thou an outlaw’s child, poor maid!
An outlaw I, by Forest laws,
And merry Needwood knows the cause.
Poor Rose — if Rose be living now” —
He wiped his iron eye and brow,
“Must bear such age, I think, as thou.
Hear ye, my mates; I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall:
There lies my halbert on the floor;
And he that steps my halbert o’er,
To do the maid injurious part,
My shaft shall quiver in his heart!
Beware loose speech, or jesting rough,
Ye all know John de Brent. Enough.”

Their Captain came, a gallant young —
(Of Tullibardine's house he sprung —)
Nor wore he yet the spur of knight;
Gay was his mien, his humor light.
And, though by courtesy controlled,
Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
The high-born maiden ill could brook
The scanning of his curious look
And dauntless eye; and yet, in sooth,
Young Lewis was a generous youth;
But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
Ill-suited to the garb and scene,
Might lightly bear construction strange,
And give loose fancy scope to range.
"Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
Like errant damosel of yore?
Does thy high quest a knight require,
Or may the venture suit a squire?"
Her dark eye flashed; she paused and sighed —
"Oh what have I to do with pride! —
Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
A suppliant for a father's life,
I crave an audience of the King.
Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
The royal pledge of grateful claims,
Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James."

The signet-ring young Lewis took,
With deep respect and altered look;
And said — "This ring our duties own;
And pardon, if, to worth unknown,

In semblance mean, obscurely veiled,
Lady, in aught my folly failed.
Soon as the day flings wide the gates,
The King shall know what suitor waits.
Please you, meanwhile, in fitting bower
Repose you till his waking hour ;
Female attendance shall obey
Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshal you the way.”
But, ere she followed, with the grace
And open bounty of her race,
She bade her slender purse be shared
Among the soldiers of the guard.
The rest with thanks their guerdon took ;
But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
On the reluctant maiden’s hold
Forced bluntly back the proffered gold ; —
“Forgive a haughty English heart,
And oh, forget its ruder part !
The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barret-cap I’ll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer crests may keep afar.”
With thanks — ’twas all she could — the maid
His rugged courtesy repaid.

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
Allan made suit to John of Brent : —
“My lady safe, oh let your grace
Give me to see my master’s face !
His minstrel I — to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in descent, since first my sires
Waked for his noble house their lyres,

Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief's birth begins our care ;
Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase ;
In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verse,
A doleful tribute! o'er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot ;
It is my right — deny it not ! ”
“ Little we reck,” said John of Brent,
“ We southern men, of long descent ;
Nor wot we how a name — a word —
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord :
Yet kind my noble landlord's part —
God bless the house of Beaudesert !
And, but I loved to drive the deer,
More than to guide the laboring steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow me ;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see.”

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage dread.
Portals they passed, where, deep within,
Spoke prisoner's moan and fetters' din ;
Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's sword,
And many an hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint, and crushing limb,

By artists formed, who deemed it shame
And sin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-browed porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward rolled
And made the bar unhasp its hold.
They entered — 'twas a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Decked the sad walls and oaken floor;
Such as the rugged days of old,
Deemed fit for captive noble's hold.
"Here," said De Brent, "thou may'st remain
Till the Leach visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well."
Retiring then the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growled anew.
Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive 'feebly raised his head;
The wondering Minstrel looked, and knew
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deemed the Chief he sought.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
Shall never stem the billows more,
Deserted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies astrand,
So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu!
And oft his fevered limbs he threw

In toss abrupt, as when her sides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
Yet cannot heave her from her seat.
Oh! how unlike her course on sea!
Or his free step on hill and lea!—
Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,
“What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
My Mother?—Douglas?—tell me all!
Have they been ruined in my fall?
Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here!
Yet speak—speak boldly!—do not fear.”
(For Allan, who his mood well knew,
Was choked with grief and terror too.)
“Who fought?—who fled? Old man, be brief;
Some might—for they had lost their Chief.
Who basely live?—who bravely died?”
“Oh, calm thee, Chief!” the Minstrel cried,
“Ellen is safe:”—“For that, thank Heaven!”
“And hopes are for the Douglas given;
The Lady Margaret too is well,
And, for thy clan—on field or fell,
Has never harp of minstrel told,
Of combat fought so true and bold.
Thy stately pine is still unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is rent.”

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
And fever's fire was in his eye;
But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
Checkered his swarthy brow and cheeks.
—“Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play
With measure bold on festal day,

In yon lone isle . . . again where ne'er
Shall harper play, or warrior hear . . .
That stirring air that peals on high,
O'er Dermid's race our victory.
Strike it! — and then (for well thou canst)
Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
Fling me the picture of the fight,
When met my clan the Saxon might.
I'll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
These grates, these walls, shall vanish then,
For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soared from battle fray."
The trembling bard with awe obeyed —
Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
But soon remembrance of the sight
He witnessed from the mountain's height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awakened the full power of song,
And bore him in career along; —
As shallop launched on river's tide,
That slow and fearful leaves the side,
But, when it feels the middle stream,
Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE.

"The Minstrel came once more to view
The eastern ridge of Ben-venue,
For, ere he parted, he would say,
Farewell to lovely Loch-Achray —
Where shall he find, in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand

There is no breeze upon the fern,
No ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyrie nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake ;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.
Is it the thunder's solemn sound
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measured tread ?
Is it the lightning's quivering glance
That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance,
The sun's retiring beams ?
— I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far !
To hero boune for battle strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
One glance at their array !

“ Their light-armed archers far and near
Surveyed the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
A twilight forest frowned,
Their barbed horsemen, in the rear,
The stern battalia crowned.

No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armor's clang,
The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
That shadowed o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirred the roe;
The host moves, like a deep sea-wave,
Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is passed, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

“At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
Had pealed the banner-cry of hell!
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear:
For life! for life! their flight they ply—
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in their rear.

Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued ;
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearmen's twilight wood ?
— 'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your lances down !
Bear back both friend and foe !'
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levelled low ;
And closely shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide.
— 'We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel cows the game !
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'

" Bearing before them, in their course,
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below ;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurled them on the foe.
I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash ;
I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
As if an hundred anvils rang !
But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank —

'My banner-man advance!
 I see,' he cried, their column shake.
 Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
 Upon them with the lance!'

The horsemen dashed among the rout,
 As deer break through the broom;
 Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
 They soon make lightsome room.
 Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne —
 Where, where was Roderick then!
 One blast upon his bugle-horn
 Were worth a thousand men.
 And reflux through the pass of fear
 The battle's tide was poured;
 Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear,
 Vanished the mountain sword.
 As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
 Receives her roaring linn,
 As the dark caverns of the deep
 Suck the wild whirlpool in,
 So did the deep and darksome pass
 Devour the battle's mingled mass;
 None linger now upon the plain,
 Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

"Now westward rolls the battle's din,
 That deep and doubling pass within.
 Minstrel, away! the work of fate
 Is bearing on: its issue wait,
 Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
 Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.
 Gray Ben-venue I soon repassed,
 Loch-Katrine lay beneath me cast.

The sun is set — the clouds are met —
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue
To the deep lake has given ;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk agen.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge,
Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel-ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.

Nearer it comes — the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged agen,
But not in mingled tide ;
The plaided warriors of the North,
High on the mountain thunder forth,
And overhang its side ;
While by the lake below appears
The darkening cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shattered band,
Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand ;
Their banners stream like tattered sail,
That flings its fragment to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Marked the fell havoc of the day.

“Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried — ‘Behold yon isle !

See! none are left to guard its strand,
But women weak, that wring the hand:
'Tis there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile;—
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o'er.
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den.
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corslet rung,
He plunged him in the wave:—
All saw the deed—the purpose knew,
And to their clamors Ben-venue
A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
Poured down at once the lowering heaven,
A whirlwind swept Loch-Katrine's breast,
Her billows reared their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
For round him showered, 'mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael.
In vain. He nears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
—Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with flame;
I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleamed in her hand:—

It darkened — but amid the moan
Of waves I heard a dying groan ;—
Another flash! the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern Matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

“‘Revenge! revenge!’ the Saxons cried,
The Gaels’ exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprang from his horse, and, from a crag,
Waved ’twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rang forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch’s name, afar
A herald’s voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell’s lord, and Roderick bold,
Were both, he said, in captive hold.”
— But here the lay made sudden stand,
The harp escaped the minstrel’s hand!
Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy:
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand, kept feeble time;
That motion ceased — yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song;
At length, no more his deafened ear
The minstrel melody can hear;
His face grows sharp — his hands are clenched,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;

Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fixed on vacancy,
Thus, motionless and moanless, drew
His parting-breath, stout Roderick Dhu'---
Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
While grim and still his spirit passed;
But when he saw that life was fled,
He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

LAMENT.

“And art thou cold, and lowly laid,
Thy foeman's dread, thy people's aid,
Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade;
For thee shall none a requiem say!
—For thee, who loved the minstrel's lay,
For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
The shelter of her exiled line,
E'en in this prison-house of thine,
I'll wail for Alpine's honored pine!

“What groans shall yonder valleys fill!
What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!
What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
Thy fall before the race was won,
Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!
There breathes not clansman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine.
Oh wo for Alpine's honored pine!

“Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!—
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prisoned eagle dies for rage.

Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again,
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her wo and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honored pine."

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
Remained in lordly bower apart,
Where played, with many-colored gleams,
Through storied pane the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lightened up a tapestried wall,
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or, if she looked, 'twas but to say,
With better omen dawned the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claimed with jealous pride;
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betrayed —
Those who such simple joys have known,
Are taught to prize them when they're gone.
But sudden, see, she lifts her head!
The window seeks with cautious tread.

What distant music has the power
To win her in this woful hour!
'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN.

"My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
My idle grayhound loathes his food,
My horse is weary of his stall,
And I am sick of captive thrall.
I wish I were as I have been,
Hunting the hart in forests green,
With bended bow and bloodhound free,
For that's the life is meet for me.

"I hate to learn the ebb of time,
From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
Inch after inch, along the wall.
The lark was wont my matins ring,
The sable rook my vespers sing;
These towers, although a king's they be,
Have not a hall of joy for me.

"No more at dawning morn I rise,
And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
And homeward wend with evening dew;
A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
And lay my trophies at her feet,
While fled the eve on wing of glee —
That life is lost to love and me!"

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
The list'ner had not turned her head,
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdoun's graceful Knight was near.
She turned the hastier, lest again
The prisoner should renew his strain.
"Oh welcome, brave Fitz-James!" she said;
"How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt." "Oh say not so,
To me no gratitude you owe.
Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
And bid thy noble father live;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's King thy suit to aid:
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lead his better mood aside.
Come, Ellen, come!—'tis more than time;
He holds his court at morning prime."
With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung.
Gently he dried the falling tear,
And gently whispered hope and cheer;
Her faltering steps half led, half staid,
Through gallery fair and high arcade,
Till, at his touch, its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glowed on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,

And, from their tissue, fancy frames
Aërial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid,
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed ;
For him she sought, who owned this state,
The dreaded prince whose will was fate!
She gazed on many a princely port,
Might well have ruled a royal court ;
On many a splendid garb she gazed —
Then turned bewildered and amazed,
For all stood bare ; and, in the room,
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent,
On him each courtier's eye was bent ;
Midst furs, and silks, and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring —
And Snowdown's Knight is Scotland's King !

As wreath of snow on mountain breast,
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay ;
No word her choking voice commands —
She showed the ring — she clasped her hands.
Oh ! not a moment could he brook,
The generous prince, that suppliant look !
Gently he raised her — and the while
Checked with a glance the circle's smile.
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kissed,
And bade her terrors be dismissed —

“Yes, Fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring,
He will redeem his signet-ring.
Ask naught for Douglas — yester even
His prince and he have much forgiven:
Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
We would not to the vulgar crowd
Yield what they craved with clamor loud;
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our council aided and our laws.
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern,
With stout De Vaux and gray Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our Throne.
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid.”

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of power —
When it can say, with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
On nature's raptures long should pry;
He stepped between — “Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle 'tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.

Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray,
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils — for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdown claims,
And Normans call me James Fitz-James.
Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause."
Then, in a tone apart and low,
— "Ah, little trait'ress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,
Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
My spell-bound steps to Ben-venue,
In dangerous hour, and all but gave
Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!"
Aloud he spoke — "Thou still dost hold
That little talisman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring —
What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

Full well the conscious maiden guessed,
He probed the weakness of her breast;
But, with that consciousness, there came
A lightening of her fears for Græme,
And more she deemed the Monarch's ire
Kindled 'gainst him, who, for her sire,
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
And to her generous feeling true,
She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
"Forbear thy suit: — the King of kings
Alone can stay life's parting wings.
I know his heart, I know his hand,
Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand; —

My fairest earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!
Hast thou no other boon to crave? —
No other captive friend to save?"
Blushing, she turned her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if she wished her sire to speak
The suit that stained her glowing cheek.
"Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
And stubborn justice holds her course.
"Malcolm, come forth!" — And, at the word,
Down kneeled the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
"For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
And sought amid thy faithful clan,
A refuge for an outlawed man,
Dishonoring thus thy loyal name —
Fetters and warder for the Græme!"
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band,
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

Harp of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with Nature's vespers blending,

With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp!

Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.

Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day.
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone.
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
'Tis now a Seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell,
And now the mountain-breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell —
And now, 'tis silent all! — Enchantress, fare-thee-well



THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

LIVES there a strain, whose sounds of mounting
fire
May rise distinguished o'er the din of war,
Or died it with yon master of the lyre,
Who sung beleaguered Ilion's evil star?
Such, WELLINGTON, might reach thee from afar,
Wafting its descant wide o'er Ocean's range;
Nor shouts, nor clashing arms, its mood could mar,
All as it swelled 'twixt each loud trumpet-change,
That clang to Britain victory, to Portugal revenge!

II.

Yes! such a strain, with all-o'erpowering measure,
Might melodize with each tumultuous sound,
Each voice of fear or triumph, wo or pleasure,
That rings Mondego's ravaged shores around;
The thundering cry of hosts with conquest crowned,
The female shriek, the ruined peasants moan,
The shout of captives from their chains unbound,
The foiled oppressor's deep and sullen groan,
A nation's choral hymn for tyranny o'erthrown.

III.

But we weak minstrels of a laggard day,
 Skilled but to imitate an elder page,
 Timid and raptureless, can we repay
 The debt thou claim'st in this exhausted age?
 Thou giv'st our lyres a theme, that might engage
 Those that could send thy name o'er sea and land,
 While sea and land shall last; for Homer's rage
 A theme; a theme for Milton's mighty hand —
 How much unmeet for us, a faint degenerate band!

IV.

Ye mountains stern! within whose rugged breast
 The friends of Scottish freedom found repose;
 Ye torrents! whose hoarse sounds have soothed **their**
 rest,
 Returning from the field of vanquished foes;
 Say, have ye lost each wild majestic close,
 That erst the choir of bards or druids flung,
 What time their hymn of victory arose,
 And Cattræth's glens with voice of triumph rung,
 And mystic Merlin harped, and gray-haired Llywarch
 sung.

V.

O! if your wilds such minstrelsy retain,
 As sure your changeful gales seem oft to say,
 When sweeping wild and sinking soft again,
 Like trumpet-jubilee, or harp's wild sway;
 If ye can echo such triumphant lay,
 Then lend the note to him has loved you long,
 Who pious gathered each tradition gray,
 That floats your solitary wastes along,
 And with affection vain gave them new voice in song.

VI.

For not till now, how soft soe'er the task
Of truant verse hath lightened graver care,
From muse or sylvan was he wont to ask,
In phrase poetic, inspiration fair ;
Careless he gave his numbers to the air, —
They came unsought for, if applauses came ;
Nor for himself prefers he now the prayer ;
Let but his verse befit a hero's fame,
Immortal be the verse! — forgot' the poet's name.

VII.

Hark, from yon misty cairn their answer tossed :
“Minstrel! the fame of whose romantic lyre,
Capricious swelling now, may soon be lost,
Like the light flickering of a cottage fire :
If to such task presumptuous thou aspire,
Seek not from us the meed to warrior due ;
Age after age has gathered son to sire,
Since our gray cliffs the din of conflict knew,
Or, pealing through our vales, victorious bugles blew.

VIII.

“Decayed our old traditionary lore,
Save where the lingering fays renew their ring,
By milkmaid seen beneath the hawthorn hoar,
Or round the marge of Minchmore's haunted spring ;
Save where their legends gray-haired shepherds sing,
That now scarce win a listening ear but thine,
Of feuds obscure, and border ravaging,
And rugged deeds recount in rugged line,
Of moonlight foray made on Teviot, Tweed, or Tyne.

IX.

" No! search romantic lands, where the near Sun
 Gives with unstinted boon ethereal flame,
 Where the rude villager, his labor done,
 In verse spontaneous chants some favored name ;
 Whether Olalia's charms his tribute claim,
 Her eye of diamond, and her locks of jet ;
 Or whether, kindling at the deeds of Græme,
 He sing, to wild Morisco measure set,
 Old Albin's red claymore, green Erin's bayonet !

X

" Explore those regions, where the flinty crest
 Of wild Nevada ever gleams with snows,
 Where in the proud Alhambra's ruined breast
 Barbaric monuments of pomp repose ;
 Or where the banners of more ruthless foes
 Than the fierce Moor, float o'er Toledo's fane,
 From whose tall towers even now the patriot throws
 An anxious glance, to spy upon the plain
 The blended ranks of England, Portugal, and Spain.

XI.

" There, of Numantian fire a swarthy spark
 Still lightens in the sun-burnt native's eye ;
 The stately port, slow step, and visage dark,
 Still mark enduring pride and constancy ;
 And, if the glow of feudal chivalry
 Beam not, as once, thy nobles' dearest pride,
 Iberia ! oft thy crestless peasantry
 Have seen the plumed Hidalgo quit their side,
 Have seen, yet dauntless stood — 'gainst fortune fought
 and died.

XII.

“ And cherished still by that unchanging race,
Are themes for minstrelsy more high than thine ;
Of strange tradition many a mystic trace,
Legend and vision, prophecy and sign ;
Where wonders wild of arabesque combine
With Gothic imagery of darker shade,
Forming a model meet for minstrel line.
Go, seek such theme ! ” — The Mountain Spirit said
With filial awe I heard — I heard, and I obeyed.



THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

I.

REARING their crests amid the cloudless skies,
And darkly clustering in the pale moonlight,
Toledo's holy towers and spires arise,
As from a trembling lake of silver white ;
Their mingled shadows intercept the sight
Of the broad burial-ground outstretched below,
And naught disturbs the silence of the night ;
All sleeps in sullen shade or silver glow,
All save the heavy swell of Teio's ceaseless flow.

All save the rushing swell of Teio's tide,
Or, distant heard, a courser's neigh or tramp ;
Their changing rounds as watchful horsemen ride,
To guard the limits of King Roderick's camp,
For, through the river's night-fog rolling damp,
Was many a proud pavilion dimly seen,
Which glimmered back, against the moon's fair lamp,
Tissues of silk and silver twisted sheen,
And standards proudly pitched, and warders armed
between.

III

But of their Monarch's person keeping ward,
Since last the deep-mouthed bell of vespers tolled,
The chosen soldiers of the royal guard
Their post beneath the proud Cathedral hold :
A band unlike their Gothic sires of old,
Who, for the cap of steel and iron mace,
Bear slender darts, and casques bedecked with gold,
While silver-studded belts their shoulders grace,
Where ivory quivers ring in the broad falchion's place.

IV.

In the light language of an idle court,
They murmured at their master's long delay,
And held his lengthened orisons in sport :
"What! will Don Roderick here till morning stay,
To wear in shrift and prayer the night away?
And are his hours in such dull penance past,
For fair Florinda's plundered charms to pay?"
Then to the east their weary eyes they cast,
And wished the lingering dawn would glimmer forth
at last.

V.

But, far within, Toledo's Prelate lent
An ear of fearful wonder to the King ;
The silver lamp a fitful lustre sent,
So long that sad confession witnessing :
For Roderick told of many a hidden thing,
Such as are lothly uttered to the air,
When Fear, Remorse, and Shame, the bosom wring,
And Guilt his secret burthen cannot bear,
And Conscience seeks in speech a respite from Despair.

VI.

Full on the Prelate's face, and silver hair,
 The stream of failing light was feebly rolled ;
 But Roderick's visage, though his head was bare,
 Was shadowed by his hand and mantle's fold.
 While of his hidden soul the sins he told,
 Proud Alaric's descendant could not brook,
 That mortal man his bearing should behold,
 Or boast that he had seen, when conscience shook,
 Fear tame a monarch's brow, Remorse a warrior's look.

VII.

The old man's faded cheek waxed yet more pale,
 As many a secret sad the king bewrayed ;
 And sign and glance eked out the unfinished tale,
 When in the midst his faltering whisper staid.
 " Thus royal Witiza was slain," — he said ;
 " Yet, holy father, deem not it was I." —
 Thus still Ambition strives her crimes to shade —
 " O rather deem 'twas stern necessity !
 Self-preservation bade, and I must kill or die.

VIII.

" And, if Florinda's shrieks alarmed the air,
 If she invoked her absent sire in vain,
 And on her knees implored that I would spare,
 Yet, reverend priest, thy sentence rash refrain ! —
 All is not as it seems — the female train
 Know by their bearing to disguise their mood :"
 But Conscience here, as if in high disdain,
 Sent to the Monarch's cheek the burning blood —
 He stayed his speech abrupt — and up the Prelate stood.

IX.

“O hardened offspring of an iron race!
What of thy crimes, Don Roderick, shall I say?
What alms, or prayers, or penance can efface
Murder’s dark spot, wash treason’s stain away!
For the foul ravisher how shall I pray,
Who, scarce repentant, makes his crime his boast?
How hope Almighty vengeance shall delay,
Unless, in mercy to yon Christian host,
He spare the shepherd, lest the guileless sheep be
lost.” —

X.

Then kindled the dark tyrant in his mood,
And to his brow returned its dauntless gloom;
“And welcome then,” he cried, “be blood for blood,
For treason treachery, for dishonor doom!
Yet will I know whence come they, or by whom.
Show, for thou canst — give forth the fated key,
And guide me, Priest, to that mysterious room,
Where, if aught true in old tradition be,
His nation’s future fates a Spanish King shall see.”

XI.

“Ill-fated Prince! recall the desperate word,
Or pause ere yet the omen thou obey!
Bethink, yon spell-bound portal would afford
Never to former Monarch entrance-way;
Nor shall it ever ope, old records say,
Save to a King, the last of all his line,
What time his empire totters to decay,
And treason digs, beneath, her fatal mine,
And, high above, impends avenging wrath divine.” —

XII.

— ‘Prelate! a Monarch’s fate brooks no delay!
 Lead on!’ — The ponderous key the old man took,
 And held the winking lamp, and led the way
 By winding stair, dark aisle, and secret nook,
 Then on an ancient gateway bent his look;
 And, as the key the desperate King essayed,
 Low muttered thunders the Cathedral shook,
 And twice he stopped, and twice new effort made,
 Till the huge bolts rolled back, and the loud hinges
 brayed.

XIII.

Long, large, and lofty, was that vaulted hall;
 Roof, walls, and floor, were all of marble stone.
 Of polished marble, black as funeral pall,
 Carved o’er with signs and characters unknown.
 A paly light as of the dawning, shone [spy;
 Through the sad bounds, but whence they could not
 For window to the upper air was none;
 Yet, by that light, Don Roderick could descry
 Wonders that ne’er till then were seen by mortal eye.

XIV.

Grim sentinels, against the upper wall,
 Of molten bronze, two Statues held their place;
 Massive their naked limbs, their stature tall,
 Their frowning foreheads golden circles grace.
 Moulded they seemed for kings of giant race,
 That lived and sinned before the avenging flood.
 This grasped a scythe, that rested on a mace;
 This spread his wings for flight, that pondering stood,
 Each stubborn seemed and stern, immutable of mood.

XV.

Fixed was the right-hand Giant's brazen look
 Upon his brother's glass of shifting sand,
 As if its ebb he measured by a book,
 Whose iron volume loaded his huge hand;
 In which was wrote of many a failing land,
 Of empires lost, and kings to exile driven;
 And o'er that pair their names in scroll expand --
 "LO, DESTINY and TIME! to whom by Heaven
 The guidance of the earth is for a season given." --

XVI.

Even while they read, the sand-glass wastes away;
 And, as the last and lagging grains did creep,
 That right-hand Giant did his club upsway,
 As one that startles from a heavy sleep.
 Full on the upper wall the mace's sweep
 At once descended with the force of thunder,
 And, hurling down at once, in crumbled heap,
 The marble boundary was rent asunder,
 And gave to Roderick's view new sights of fear and
 wonder.

XVII.

For they might spy, beyond that mighty breach,
 Realms as of Spain in visioned prospect laid,
 Castles and towers, in due proportion each,
 As by some skillful artist's hand portrayed;
 Here, crossed by many a wild Sierra's shade,
 And boundless plains that tire the traveller's eye;
 There, rich with vineyard and with olive-glade,
 Or deep-embrowned by forests huge and high,
 Or washed by mighty streams, that slowly murmured by.

XVIII.

And here, as erst upon the antique stage,
 Passed forth the bands of maskers trimly led,
 In various forms, and various equipage,
 While fitting strains the hearer's fancy fed ;
 So, to sad Roderick's eye in order spread,
 Successive pageants filled that mystic scene,
 Showing the fate of battles ere they bled,
 And issue of events that had not been ;
 And ever and anon strange sounds were heard between.

XIX.

First shrilled an unrepeatd female shriek ! —
 It seemed as if Don Roderick knew the call,
 For the bold blood was blanching in his cheek. —
 Then answered kettle-drum and atabal,
 Gong-peal and cymbal-clank the ear appal,
 The Tecbir war-cry, and the Lelies yell,
 Ring wildly dissonant along the hall.
 Need not to Roderick their dread import tell —
 "The Moor!" he cried, "the Moor! — ring out the
 tocsin bell !

XX.

"They come ! they come ! I see the groaning lands
 White with the turbans of each Arab horde,
 Swart Zaarah joins her misbelieving bands,
 Alla and Mahomet their battle-word,
 The choice they yield the Kofan or the sword —
 See how the Christians rush to arms amain ! —
 In yonder shout the voice of conflict roared ;
 The shadowy hosts are closing on the plain —
 Now, God and St. Iago strike, for the good cause of
 Spain !

XXI.

"By heaven, the Moors prevail! the Christians yield!
 Their coward leader gives for flight the sign!
 The sceptred craven mounts to quit the field —
 Is not yon steed Orelia? — Yes, 'tis mine!
 But never was she turned from battle-line; —
 Lo! where the recreant spurs o'er stock and stone!
 Curses pursue the slave and wrath divine!
 Rivers engulf him!" — "Hush," in shuddering tone,
 The Prelate said; "rash Prince, yon visioned form's
 thine own." —

XXII.

Just then, a torrent crossed the flier's course;
 The dangerous ford the Kingly Likeness tried;
 But the deep eddies whelmed both man and horse,
 Swept like benighted peasant down the tide;
 And the proud Moslemah spread far and wide,
 As numerous as their native locust band;
 Berber and Ismael's sons the spoils divide,
 With naked scimetars mete out the land,
 And for their bondsmen base the free-born natives
 brand.

XXIII.

Then rose the grated Harem, to enclose
 The loveliest maidens of the Christian line;
 Then, menials to their misbelieving foes,
 Castile's young nobles held forbidden wine;
 Then, too, the holy Cross, salvation's sign,
 By impious hands was from the altar thrown,
 And the deep aisles of the polluted shrine
 Echoed, for holy hymn and organ tone,
 The Santon's frantic dance, the Fakir's gibbering
 moan.

XXIV.

How fares Don Roderick? — E'en as one who spies
Flames dart their glare o'er midnight's sable woof,
And hears around his children's piercing cries,
And sees the pale assistants stand aloof;
While cruel Conscience brings him bitter proof,
His folly, or his crime, have caused his grief;
And, while above him nods the crumbling roof,
He curses earth and heaven — himself in chief —
Desperate of earthly aid, despairing Heaven's relief!

XXV.

That scythe-armed Giant turned his fatal glass,
And twilight on the landscape closed her wings;
Far to Asturian hills the war-sounds pass,
And in their stead rebeck or timbrel rings;
And to the sound the bell-decked dancer springs,
Bazars resound as when their marts are met,
In tourney light the Moor his jerreed flings,
And on the land, as evening seemed to set,
The Inmaun's chant was heard from mosque or minaret.

XXVI.

So passed that pageant. Ere another came,
The visionary scene was wrapped in smoke, [flame;
Whose sulph'rous wreaths were crossed by sheets of
With every flash a bolt explosive broke,
Till Roderick deemed the fiends had burst their yoke,
And waved 'gainst heaven the infernal gonfalone!
For War a new and dreadful language spoke,
Never by ancient warrior heard or known;
Lightning and smoke her breath, and thunder was her
tone.

XXVII.

From the dim landscape roll the clouds away —
The Christians have regained their heritage ;
Before the Cross has waned the Crescent's ray,
And many a monastery decks the stage,
And lofty church, and low-browed hermitage.
The land obeys a Hermit and a Knight, —
The Genii these of Spain for many an age ;
This clad in sackcloth, that in armor bright,
And that was VALOR named, this BIGOTRY was hight.

XXVIII.

VALOR was harnessed like a Chief of old,
Armed at all points, and prompt for knightly gest ;
His sword was tempered in the Ebro cold,
Morena's eagle-plume adorned his crest,
The spoils of Afric's lion bound his breast.
Fierce he stepped forward, and flung down his gage,
As if of mortal kind to brave the best.
Him followed his Companion, dark and sage,
As he, my Master, sung the dangerous Archimage.

XXIX.

Haughty of heart and brow the Warrior came,
In look and language proud as proud might be,
Vaunting his lordship, lineage, fights and fame,
Yet wast that bare-foot Monk more proud than he ;
And as the ivy climbs the tallest tree,
So round the loftiest soul his toils he wound,
And with his spells subdued the fierce and free,
Till ermined Age, and Youth in arms renowned,
Honoring his scourge and hair-cloth, meekly kissed the
ground.

XXX.

And thus it chanced that VALOR, peerless Knight,
Who ne'er to King or Kaiser veiled his crest,
Victorious still in bull-feast, or in fight,
Since first his limbs with mail he did invest,
Stooped ever to that Anchoret's behest ;
Nor reasoned of the right nor of the wrong,
But at his bidding laid the lance in rest,
And wrought fell deeds the troubled world along,
For he was fierce as brave, and pitiless as strong.

XXXI.

Oft his proud galleys sought some new-found world,
That latest sees the sun, or first the morn ;
Still at that Wizard's feet their spoils he hurled, —
Ingots of ore from rich Potosi borne,
Crowns by Caciques, aigrettes by Omrahs worn,
Wrought of rare gems, but broken, rent, and foul ;
Idols of gold from heathen temples torn,
Bedabbled all with blood. — With grisly scowl
The Hermit marked the stains, and smiled beneath his
cowl.

XXXII.

Then did he bless the offering, and bade make
Tribute to heaven of gratitude and praise ;
And at his word the choral hymns awake,
And many a hand the silver censer sways.
But with the incense-breath these censers raise,
Mix steams from corpses smouldering in the fire ;
The groans of prisoned victims mar the lays,
And shrieks of agony confound the quire,
While, 'mid the mingled sounds, the darkened scenes
expire.

XXXIII.

Preluding light, were strains of music heard,
As once again revolved that measured sand ;
Such sounds as when, for sylvan dance prepared,
Gay Xeres summons forth her vintage band ;
When for the light Bolero ready stand
The Mozo blithe, with gay Muchacha met,
He conscious of his broidered cap and band,
She of her netted locks and light corsette,
Each tiptoe perched to spring, and shake the castanet.

XXXIV.

And well such strains the opening scene became ;
For VALOR had relaxed his ardent look,
And at a lady's feet, like lion tame,
Lay stretched, full loth the weight of arms to brook ;
And softened BIGOTRY, upon his book,
Pattered a task of little good or ill ;
But the blithe peasant plied his pruning-hook,
Whistled the muleteer o'er vale and hill,
And rung from village-green the merry Seguidille.

XXXV.

Gray Royalty, grown impotent of toil,
Let the grave sceptre slip his lazy hold,
And careless saw his rule become the spoil
Of a loose Female and her Minion bold ;
But peace was on the cottage and the fold,
From court intrigue, from bickering faction far ;
Beneath the chestnut-tree Love's tale was told ;
And to the tinkling of the light guitar,
Sweet stooped the western sun, sweet rose the evening
star.

XXXVI.

As that sea-cloud, in size like human hand
 When first from Carmel by the Tishbite seen,
 Came slowly overshadowing Israel's land,
 Awhile, perchance, bedecked with colors sheen,
 While yet the sunbeams on its skirts had been,
 Limning with purple and with gold its shroud,
 Till darker folds obscured the blue serene,
 And blotted heaven with one broad sable cloud —
 Then sheeted rain burst down, and whirlwinds howled
 aloud ; —

XXXVII.

Even so upon that peaceful scene was poured,
 Like gathering clouds, full many a foreign band,
 And HE, their Leader, wore in sheath his sword,
 And offered peaceful front and open hand ;
 Veiling the perjured treachery he planned,
 By friendship's zeal and honor's specious guise,
 Until he won the passes of the land ;
 Then, burst were honor's oath, and friendship's ties !
 He clutched his vulture-grasp, and called fair Spain
 his prize.

XXXVIII.

An Iron Crown his anxious forehead bore ;
 And well such diadem his heart became,
 Who ne'er his purpose for remorse gave o'er,
 Or checked his course for piety or shame ;
 Who, trained a soldier, deemed a soldier's fame
 Might flourish in the wreath of battles won,
 Though neither truth nor honor decked his name ;
 Who, placed by fortune on a Monarch's throne,
 Recked not of Monarch's faith, or Mercy's kingl^y
 tone.

XXXIX.

From a rude isle his ruder lineage came :
 The spark, that, from a suburb hovel's hearth
 Ascending, wraps some capital in flame,
 Hath not a meaner or more sordid birth.
 And for the soul that bade him waste the earth —
 The sable land-flood from some swamp obscure,
 That poisons the glad husband-field with dearth,
 And by destruction bids its fame endure,
 Hath not a source more sullen, stagnant, and impure.

XL.

Before that Leader strode a shadowy Form :
 Her limbs like mist, her torch like meteor showed,
 With which she beckoned him through fight and storm,
 And all he crushed that crossed his desperate road,
 Nor thought, nor feared, nor looked on what he trode ;
 Realms could not glut his pride, blood could not slake,
 So oft as e'er she shook her torch abroad —
 It was AMBITION bade his terrors wake,
 Nor deigned she, as of yore, a milder form to take.

XLI.

No longer now she spurned at mean revenge,
 Or stayed her hand for conquered foeman's moan,
 As when, the fates of aged Rome to change,
 By Cæsar's side she crossed the Rubicon ;
 Nor joyed she to bestow the spoils she won,
 As when the banded powers of Greece were tasked
 To war beneath the Youth of Macedon :
 No seemly veil her modern minion asked,
 He saw her hideous face, and loved the fiend un-
 masked.

XLII.

That Prelate marked his march — On banners blazed
With battles won in many a distant land,
On eagle-standards and on arms he gazed ; [stand ?
“ And hop’st thou, then,” he said “ thy power shall
O thou hast builded on the shifting sand,
And thou hast tempered it with slaughter’s flood ;
And know, fell scourge in the Almighty’s hand !
Gore-moistened trees shall perish in the bud,
And, by a bloody death, shall die the Man of Blood !

XLIII.

The ruthless Leader beckoned from his train
A wan fraternal Shade, and bade him kneel,
And paled his temples with the crown of Spain,
While trumpets rang, and heralds cried, “ Castile ! ”
Not that he loved him — No ! — in no man’s weal,
Scarce in his own, e’er joyed that sullen heart ;
Yet round that throne he bade his warriors wheel,
That the poor puppet might perform his part,
And be a sceptred slave, at his stern beck to start.

XLIV.

But on the Natives of that Land misused,
Not long the silence of amazement hung,
Nor brooked they long their friendly faith abused,
For, with a common shriek, the general tongue
Exclaimed, “ To arms ! ” and fast to arms they sprung
And VALOR woke, that Genius of the land !
Pleasure, and ease, and sloth aside he flung,
As burst the awakening Nazarite his band,
When ’gainst his treacherous foes he clenched his
dreadful hand.

XLV.

That mimic Monarch now cast anxious eye
Upon the Satraps that begirt him round,
Now doffed his royal robe in act to fly,
And from his brow the diadem unbound,
So oft, so near, the Patriot bugle wound,
From Tarik's walls to Bilboa's mountains blown ;
These martial satelites hard labor found,
To guard awhile his substituted throne —
Light recking of his cause, but battling for their own.

XLVI.

From Alpuhara's peak that bugle rung,
And it was echoed from Corunna's wall ;
Stately Seville responsive war-shout flung,
Granada caught it in her Moorish hall ;
Galicia bade her children fight or fall,
Wild Biscay shook his mountain coronet,
Valencia roused her at the battle-call,
And, foremost still where Valor's sons are met,
Fast started to his gun each fiery Miquelet.

XLVII.

But unappalled, and burning for the fight,
The Invaders march, of victory secure ;
Skillful their force to sever or unite,
And trained alike to vanquish or endure.
Nor skillful less, cheap conquest to ensure,
Discord to breathe, and jealousy to sow,
To quell by boasting, and by bribes to lure ;
While naught against them bring the unpracticed foe,
Save hearts for freedom's cause, and hands for free-
dom's blow.

XLVIII.

Proudly they march — but O ! they march not forth
By one hot field to crown a brief campaign,
As when their eagles, sweeping through the North,
Destroyed at every stoop an ancient reign !
Far other fate had heaven decreed for Spain ;
In vain the steel, in vain the torch was plied,
New Patriot armies started from the slain,
High blazed the war, and long, and far and wide,
And oft the God of Battles blessed the righteous side.

XLIX.

Nor unatoned, where Freedom's foes prevail,
Remained their savage waste. With blade and brand,
By day the Invaders ravaged hill and dale,
But, with the darkness, the Guerilla band
Came like night's tempest, and avenged the land,
And claimed for blood the retribution due,
Probed the hard heart, and lopped the murderous hand ;
And Dawn, when o'er the scene her beams she threw,
'Midst ruins they had made the spoilers' corpses knew.

L.

What minstrel verse may sing, or tongue may tell,
Amid the visioned strife from sea to sea,
How oft the Patriot banners rose or fell,
Still honored in defeat as victory !
For that sad pageant of events to be,
Showed every form of fight by field and flood ;
Slaughter and Ruin, shouting forth their glee,
Beheld, while riding on the tempest-scud,
The waters choked with slain, the earth bedrenched
with blood !

LI.

Then Zaragoza — blighted be the tongue
That names thy name without the honor due !
For never hath the harp of minstrel rung,
Of faith so felly proved, so firmly true !
Mine, sap, and bomb, thy shattered ruins knew ;
Each art of war's extremity had room,
Twice from thy half-sacked streets the foe withdrew,
And when at length stern Fate decreed thy doom,
They won not Zaragoza, but her children's bloody tomb

LII.

Yet raise thy head, sad City ! Though in chains,
Enthralled thou canst not be ! Arise and claim
Reverence from every heart where Freedom reigns,
For what thou worshippest ! — thy sainted Dame,
She of the Column, honored be her name,
By all, whate'er their creed, who honor love !
And like the sacred relics of the flame,
That gave some martyr to the blest above,
To every loyal heart may thy sad embers prove !

LIII.

Nor thine alone such wreck ! Gerona fair !
Faithful to death, thy heroes should be sung,
Manning the towers, while o'er their heads the air
Swart as the smoke from raging furnace hung ;
Now thicker darkening where the mine was sprung,
Now briefly lightened by the cannon's flare,
Now arched with fire-sparks as the bomb was flung
And reddening now with conflagration's glare,
While by the fatal light the foes for storm prepare.

LIV.

While all around was danger, strife, and fear,
While the earth shook, and darkened was the sky,
And wide Destruction stunned the listening ear,
Appalled the heart, and stupified the eye, —
Afar was heard that thrice-repeated cry,
In which old Albion's heart and tongue unite,
Whene'er her soul is up and pulse beats high,
Whether it hail the wine-cup or the fight,
And bid each arm be strong, or bid each heart be light,

LV.

Don Roderick turned him as the shout grew loud —
A varied scene the changeful vision showed,
For where the ocean mingled with the cloud,
A gallant navy stemmed the billows broad.
From mast and stern St. George's symbol flowed,
Blent with the silver cross to Scotland dear;
Mottling the sea their landward barges rowed,
And flashed the sun on bayonet, brand, and spear,
And the wild beach returned the seaman's jovial cheer.

LVI.

It was a dread, yet spirit-stirring sight!
The billows foamed beneath a thousand oars,
Fast as they land the red-cross ranks unite,
Legions on legions brightening all the shores.
Then banners rise, and cannon-signal roars,
Then peals the warlike thunder of the drum,
Thrills the loud fife, the trumpet-flourish pours,
And patriot hopes awake, and doubts are dumb,
For, bold in Freedom's cause, the bands of Ocean come

LVII.

A various host they came — whose ranks display
Each mode in which the warrior meets the fight ;
The deep battallion locks its firm array,
And meditates his aim the marksman light ;
Far glance the lines of sabres flashing bright,
Where mounted squadrons shake the echoing mead,
Lacks not artillery breathing flame and night,
Nor the fleet ordnance whirled by rapid steed
That rivals lightning's flash in ruin and in speed.

LVIII.

A various host — from kindred realms they came,
Brethren in arms, but rivals in renown —
For yon fair bands shall merry England claim,
And with their deeds of valor deck her crown.
Hers their bold port, and hers their martial frown,
And hers their scorn of death in freedom's cause,
Their eyes of azure, and their locks of brown,
And the blunt speech that bursts without a pause,
And free-born thoughts, which league the Soldier with
the Laws.

LIX.

And O! loved warriors of the Minstrel's land!
Yonder your bonnets nod, your tartans wave!
The rugged form may mark the mountain band,
And harsher features, and a mien more grave;
But ne'er in battle-field throbb'd heart so brave
As that which beats beneath the Scottish plaid,
And when the pibroch bids the battle rave,
And level for the charge your arms are laid,
Where lives the desperate foe, that for such onset staid!

LX.

Hark! from yon stately ranks what laughter rings,
 Mingling wild mirth with war's stern minstrelsy,
 His jest while each blithe comrade round him flings,
 And moves to death with military glee:
 Boast, Erin, boast them! tameless, frank, and free,
 In kindness warm, and fierce in danger known,
 Rough Nature's children, humorous as she:
 And HE, yon Chieftain -- strike the proudest tone
 Of thy bold harp, green Isle! -- the Hero is thine own.

LXI.

Now on the scene Vinreira should be shown,
 On Talavera's fight should Roderick gaze,
 And hear Corunna wail her battle won,
 And see Busaco's crest with light'ning blaze: --
 But shall fond fable mix with heroes' praise?
 Hath Fiction's stage for Truth's long triumphs room?
 And dare her wild-flowers mingle with the bays,
 That claim a long eternity to bloom
 Around the warrior's crest, and o'er the warrior's tomb!

LXII.

Or may I give adventurous Fancy scope,
 And stretch a bold hand to the awful veil
 That hides futurity from anxious hope,
 Bidding beyond it scenes of glory hail,
 And painting Europe rousing at the tale
 Of Spain's invaders from her confines hurled,
 While kindling Nations buckle on their mail,
 And Fame, with clarion-blast and wings unfurled,
 To freedom and revenge awakes an injured World.

LXIII.

O vain, though anxious, is the glance I cast,
Since Fate has marked futurity her own : —
Yet Fate resigns to Worth the glorious past,
The deeds recorded and the laurels won.
Then, though the Vault of Destiny be gone,
King, Prelate, all the phantasms of my brain,
Melted away like mist-wreaths in the sun,
Yet grant for faith, for valor, and for Spain,
One note of pride and fire, a Patriot's parting strain.



CONCLUSION.

I.

“WHO shall command Estrella’s mountain-tide
Back to the source, when tempest-chafed, to hie?
Who, when Gascogne’s vexed gulf is raging wide,
Shall hush it as a nurse her infant’s cry?
His magic power let such vain boaster try,
And when the torrent shall his voice obey,
And Biscay’s whirlwinds list his lullaby,
Let him stand forth and bar mine eagles’ way,
And they shall heed his voice, and at his bidding stay.

“Else, ne’er to stoop, till high on Lisbon’s towers
They close their wings, the symbol of our yoke,
And their own sea hath whelmed yon red-cross
Power!” —
Thus, on the summit of Alverca’s rock,
To Marshal, Duke, and Peer, Gaul’s leader spoke:
While downward on the land his legions press,
Before them it was rich with vine and flock,
And smiled like Eden in her summer dress; —
Behind their wasteful march, a reeking wilderness.

III.

And shall the boastful Chief maintain his word,
Though Heaven hath heard the wailings of the land,
Though Lusitania whet her vengeful sword,
Though Briton arm, and WELLINGTON command!
No: grim Busaco's iron ridge shall stand
An adamantine barrier to his force!
And from its base shall wheel his shattered band,
As from the unshaken rock the torrent hoarse
Bears off its broken waves, and seeks a devious course.

IV.

Yet not because Alcoba's mountain-hawk
Hath on his best and bravest made her food,
In numbers confident, yon Chief shall baulk
His Lord's imperial thirst for spoil and blood:
For full in view the promised conquest stood,
And Lisbon's matrons, from their walls, might sum
The myriads that had half the world subdued,
And hear the distant thunders of the drum,
That bids the band of France to storm and havoc come.

V.

Four moons have heard these thunders idly rolled,
Have seen these wistful myriads eye their prey,
As famished wolves survey a guarded fold —
But in the middle path, a Lion lay!
At length they move — but not to battle-fray,
Nor blaze yon fires where meets the manly fight;
Beacons of infamy, they light the way,
Where cowardice and cruelty unite,
To damn with double shame their ignominious flight.

VI.

O triumph for the Fiends of Lust and Wrath!
 Ne'er to be told, yet ne'er to be forgot,
 What wanton horrors marked their wrackful path!
 The peasant butchered in his ruined cot,
 The hoary priest even at the altar shot,
 Childhood and age given o'er to sword and flame,
 Woman to infamy; no crime forgot,
 By which inventive demons might proclaim
 Immortal hate to Man, and scorn of God's great name!

VII.

The rudest sentinel, in Britain born,
 With horror paused to view the havoc done,
 Gave his poor crust to feed some wretch forlorn,
 Wiped his stern eye, then fiercer grasped his gun,
 Nor with less zeal shall Britain's peaceful son
 Exult the debt of sympathy to pay;
 Riches nor poverty the tax shall shun,
 Nor prince nor peer, the wealthy nor the gay,
 Nor the poor peasant's mite, nor bard's more worthless
 lay.

VIII.

But thou — unforgotten wilt thou yield to Fate,
 Minion of Fortune, now miscalled in vain!
 Can vantage-ground no confidence create,
 Marcella's pass, nor Guarda's mountain chain?
 Vain-glorious Fugitive? yet turn again!
 Behold, where named by some Prophetic Seer,
 Flows Honor's Fountain, as fore-doomed the stain
 From thy dishonored name and arms to clear —
 Fallen Child of Fortune turn, redeem her favor here!

IX.

Yet, ere thou turn'st, collect each distant aid :
 Those chief that never heard the Lion roar !
 Within whose souls lives not a trace portrayed
 Of Talavera, or Mondego's shore !
 Marshal each band thou hast, and summon more ;
 Of war's fell stratagems exhaust the whole ;
 Rank upon rank, squadron on squadron pour,
 Legion on legion on thy foeman roll,
 And weary out his arm — thou canst not quell his soul.

X.

O vainly gleams with steel Agueda's shore,
 Vainly thy squadrons hide Assuava's plain,
 And front thy flying thunders as they roar,
 With frantic charge and tenfold odds, in vain !
 And what avails thee that, for Cameron slain,
 Wild from his plaided ranks the yell was given —
 Vengeance and grief gave mountain rage the rein,
 And, at the bloody spear-point headlong driven,
 Thy Despot's giant guards fled like the rack of heaven.

XI.

Go, baffled Boaster ! teach thy haughty mood
 To plead at thine imperious master's throne !
 Say, thou hast left his legions in their blood,
 Deceived his hopes, and frustrated thine own ;
 Say, that thine utmost skill and valor shown,
 By British skill and valor were outvied ;
 Last say, thy conqueror was WELLINGTON !
 And if he chafe, be his own fortune tried —
 God and our cause to 'friend, the venture we'll abide.

XII.

But ye, ye heroes of that well-fought day,
 How shall a bard, unknowing and unknown,
 His meed to each victorious leader pay,
 Or bind on every brow the laurels won?
 Yet fain my harp would wake its boldest tone,
 O'er the wide sea to hail CADOGAN brave;
 And he, perchance, the minstrel note might own,
 Mindful of meeting brief that Fortune gave
 'Mid yon far western isles, that hear the Atlantic rave.

XIII.

Yes, hard the task, when Britons wield the sword,
 To give each chief and every field its fame:
 Hark! Albuera thunders BERESFORD,
 And red Barossa shouts for dauntless GRÈME!
 O for a verse of tumult and of flame,
 Bold as the bursting of their cannon sound,
 To bid the world re-echo to their fame!
 For never, upon gory battle-ground,
 With conquest's well-bought wreath were braver victors
 crowned!

XIV.

O who shall grudge him Albuera's bays,
 Who brought a race degenerate to the field,
 Roused them to emulate their fathers' praise,
 Tempered their headlong rage, their courage steeled,
 And raised fair Lusitania's fallen shield,
 And gave new edge to Lusitania's sword,
 And taught her sons forgotten arms to wield —
 Shivered my harp, and burst its every chord,
 If it forget thy worth, victorious BERESFORD!

XV.

Not on that bloody field of battle won,
Though Gaul's proud legions rolled like mist away,
Was his self-devoted valor shown, —
He gaged but life on that illustrious day ;
But when he toiled those squadrons to array,
Who fought like Britons in the bloody game,
Sharper than Polish pipe or assagay,
He braved the shafts of censure and of shame,
And, dearer far than life, he pledged a soldier's fame.

XVI.

Nor be his praise o'erpassed who strove to hide
Beneath the warrior's vest affection's wound,
Whose wish, Heaven for his country's weal denied ;
Danger and fate he sought, but glory found.
From clime to clime, where'er war's trumpets sound,
The wanderer went ; yet, Caledonia ! still
Thine was his thought in march and tented ground ;
He dreamed 'mid Alpine cliffs of Athole's hill,
And heard in Ebro's roar his Lyndoch's lovely rill.

XVII.

O hero of a race renowned of old,
Whose war-cry oft has waked the battle-swell,
Since first distinguished in the onset bold,
Wild sounding when the Roman rampart fell !
By Wallace' side it rung the Southron's knell,
Alderne, Kilsythe, and Tibber owned its fame,
Tummell's rude pass can of its terrors tell,
But ne'er from prouder field arose the name,
Than when wild Ronda learned the conquering shout
of GREME !

XVIII.

But all too long through seas unknown and dark,
(With Spenser's parable I close my tale,)
By shoal and rock hath steered my venturous bark ;
And landward now I drive before the gale,
And now the blue and distant shore I hail,
And nearer now I see the port expand,
And now I gladly furl my weary sail,
And, as the prow-light touches on the strand,
I strike my red-cross flag, and bind my skiff to land.



BALLADS, LYRICAL PIECES,
AND
SONGS.

BALLADS, LYRICAL PIECES,
AND SONGS.

GLENFINLAS, OR LORD RONALD'S
CORONACH.

“O HONE a rie’! O hone a rie’!
The pride of Albin’s line is o’er,
And fallen Glenartney’s stateliest tree;
We ne’er shall see Lord Ronald more!

O, sprung from great Macgillianore,
The chief who never feared a foe,
How matchless was thy broad claymore,
How deadly thine unerring bow!

Well can the Saxon widows tell,
How, on the Teith’s resounding shore,
The boldest Lowland warriors fell,
As down from Lenny’s pass you bore.

But o’er his hills, on festal day,
How blazed Lord Ronald’s Beltane tree;
While youths and maids the light strathspey
So nimbly danced, with Highland glee.

Cheered by the strength of Ronald's shell,
E'en age forgot his tresses hoar;
But now the loud lament they swell,
O, ne'er to see Lord Ronald more!

From distant isles a chieftain came,
The joys of Ronald's hall to find,
And chase with him the dark brown game
That bounds o'er Albin's hills of wind.

'Twas Moy; whom, in Columba's isle,
The seer's prophetic spirit found,
As, with a minstrel's fire the while,
He waked his harp's harmonious sound.

Full many a spell to him was known,
Which wand'ring spirits shrink to hear;
And many a lay of potent tone,
Was never meant for mortal ear.

For there, 'tis said, in mystic mood,
High converse with the dead they hold,
And oft espy the fated shroud,
That shall the future corpse enfold.

O so it fell, that on a day,
To rouse the red deer from their den,
The chiefs have ta'en their distant way,
And scoured the deep Glenfinlas glen.

No vassals wait, their sports to aid,
To watch their safety, deck their board:
Their simple dress, the Highland plaid,
Their trusty guard, the Highland sword.

Three summer days, through brake and dell,
Their whistling shafts successful flew ;
And still, when dewy evening fell,
The quarry to their hut they drew.

In gray Glenfinlas' deepest nook
The solitary cabin stood,
Fast by Moneira's sullen brook,
Which murmurs through that lonely wood.

Soft fell the night, the sky was calm,
When three successive days had flown ;
And summer mist in dewy balm
Steeped heathy bank and mossy stone.

The moon, half-hid in silvery flakes,
Afar her dubious radiance shed,
Quiv'ring on Katrine's distant lakes,
And resting on Benledi's head.

Now in their hut, in social guise,
Their sylvan fare the chiefs enjoy ;
And pleasure laughs in Ronald's eyes,
As many a pledge he quaffs to Moy.

—“What lack we here to crown our bliss,
While thus the pulse of joy beats high?
What, but fair woman's yielding kiss,
Her panting breath, and melting eye?”

“To chase the deer of yonder shades,
This morning left their father's pile
The fairest of our mountain maids,
The daughters of the proud Glengyle.

“Long have I sought sweet Mary’s heart,
And dropped the tear, and heaved the sigh:
But vain the lover’s wily art,
Beneath a sister’s watchful eye.

“But thou may’st teach that guardian fair,
While far with Mary I am flown,
Of other hearts to cease her care,
And find it hard to guard her own.

“Touch but thy harp, thou soon shalt see
The lovely Flora of Glengyle,
Unmindful of her charge and me,
Hang on thy notes, ’twixt tear and smile.

“Or, if she choose a melting tale,
All underneath the greenwood bough,
Will good St. Oran’s rule prevail,
Stern huntsman of the rigid brow?” —

— “Since Enrick’s fight, since Morna’s death,
No more on me shall rapture rise,
Responsive to the panting breath,
Or yielding kiss, or melting eyes.

“E’en then, when o’er the heath of wo,
Where sunk my hopes of love and fame,
I bade my harp’s wild wailings flow,
On me the seer’s sad spirit came.

“The last dread curse of angry heaven,
With ghastly sights and sounds of wo,
To dash each glimpse of joy, was given —
The gift, the future ill to know

“The bark thou saw’st, yon summer morn,
So gayly part from Oban’s bay,
My eye beheld her dashed and torn,
Far on the rocky Colonsay.

“Thy Fergus too — thy sister’s son,
Thou saw’st, with pride, the gallant’s power,
As marching ’gainst the Lord of Downe,
He left the skirts of huge Benmore.

“Thou only saw’st their tartans wave,
s down Benvoirlich’s side they wound,
Heard’st but the pibroch, answ’ring brave
To many a target clanking round.

“I heard the groans, I marked the tears,
I saw the wound his bosom bore,
When on the serried Saxon spears
He poured his clan’s resistless roar.

“And thou, who bid’st me think of bliss,
And bid’st my heart awake to glee,
And court, like thee, the wanton kiss,
That heart, O Ronald, bleeds for thee!

“I see the death-damps chill thy brow;
I hear thy Warning Spirit cry;
The corpse-lights dance — they’re gone, and now —
No more is given to gifted eye!” —

— “Alone enjoy thy dreary dreams,
Sad prophet of the evil hour!
Say, should we scorn joy’s transient beams,
Because to-morrow’s storm may lower?”

“ Or false, or sooth, thy words of wo,
Clangillian’s chieftain ne’er shall fear;
His blood shall bound at rapture’s glow,
Though doomed to stain the Saxon spear.

“ E’en now, to meet me in yon dell,
My Mary’s buskins brush the dew.” —
He spoke, nor bade the chief farewell,
But called his dogs, and gay withdrew.

Within an hour returned each hound;
In rushed the rousers of the deer;
They howled in melancholy sound,
Then closely couch beside the Seer.

No Ronald yet; though midnight came,
And sad were Moy’s prophetic dreams,
As, bending o’er the dying flame,
He fed the watch-fire’s quiv’ring gleams.

Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
And sudden cease their moaning howl;
Close pressed to Moy, they mark their fears
By shiv’ring limbs and stifled growl.

Untouched, the harp began to ring,
As softly, slowly, oped the door;
And shook, responsive, ev’ry string,
As light a footstep pressed the floor.

And, by the watch-fire’s glim’ring light,
Close by the Minstrel’s side was seen
A huntress maid, in beauty bright,
All dropping wet her robes of green.

All dropping wet her garments seem ;
Chilled was her cheek, her bosom bare,
As, bending o'er the dying gleam,
She wrung the moisture from her hair.

With maiden blush she softly said,
"O gentle huntsman, hast thou seen,
In deep Glenfinlas' moonlight glade,
A lovely maid in vest of green:

"With her a chief in Highland pride,
His shoulders bear the hunter's bow,
The mountain-dirk adorns his side,
Far on the wind his tartans flow?"

"And who art thou? and who are they?"
All ghastly gazing, Moy replied:
"And why, beneath the moon's pale ray,
Dare ye thus roam Glenfinlas' side?"

"Where wild Loch-Katrine pours her tide,
Blue, dark, and deep, round many an isle,
Our father's towers o'erhang her side,
The castle of the bold Glengyle.

"To chase the dun Glenfinlas deer,
Our woodland course this morn we bore,
And haply met, while wand'ring here,
The son of great Macgillianore.

"O aid me, then, to seek the pair,
Whom loit'ring in the woods I lost ;
Alone I dare not venture there,
Where walks, they say, the shrieking ghost."

“Yes, many a shrieking ghost walks there ;
Then, first, my own sad vow to keep,
Here will I pour my midnight prayer,
Which still must rise when mortals sleep.”

“O first, for pity’s gentle sake,
Guide a lone wand’rer on her way!
For I must cross the haunted brake,
And reach my father’s tow’rs ere day.”

“First, three times tell each Ave bead,
And thrice a Pater-noster say ;
Then kiss with me the holy reed :
So shall we safely wind our way.”

“O shame to knighthood, strange and foul !
Go, doff the bonnet from thy brow,
And shroud thee in the monkish cowl,
Which best befits thy sullen vow.

“Not so, by high Dunlathmon’s fire,
Thy heart was froze to love and joy,
When gayly rung thy raptured lyre,
To wanton Mořna’s melting eye.”

Wild stared the Minstrel’s eyes of flame,
And high his sable locks arose,
And quick his color went and came,
As fear and rage alternate rose.

“And thou ! when by the blazing oak
I lay, to love and her resigned,
Say, rode ye on the eddying smoke,
Or sailed ye on the midnight wind !

“Not thine a race of mortal blood,
Nor old Glengyle’s pretended line;
Thy dame, the Lady of the Flood,
Thy sire, the Monarch of the Mine.”

He muttered thrice St. Oran’s rhyme,
And thrice St. Fillan’s pow’rful prayer
Then turned him to the eastern clime,
And sternly shook his coal-black hair.

And, bending o’er his harp, he flung
His wildest witch-notes on the wind;
And loud, and high, and strange, they rung,
As many a magic change they find.

Tall waxed the Spirit’s alt’ring form,
Till to the roof her stature grew;
Then, mingling with the rising storm,
With one wild yell, away she flew.

Rain beats, hail rattles, whirlwinds tear,
The slender hut in fragments flew;
But not a lock of Moy’s loose hair
Was waved by wind, or wet by dew.

Wild mingling with the howling gale,
Loud bursts of ghastly laughter rise;
High o’er the Minstrel’s head they sail,
And die amid the northern skies.

The voice of thunder shook the wood,
As ceased the more than mortal yell;
And, spattering foul, a shower of blood
Upon the hissing fire-brands fell.

Next, dropped from high a mangled arm ;
The fingers strained a half-drawn blade :
And last, the life-blood streaming warm,
Torn from the trunk, a gasping head.

Oft o'er that head, in battling field,
Streamed the proud crest of high Benmore,
That arm the broad claymore could wield,
Which dyed the Teith with Saxon gore.

Wo to Moneira's sullen rills!
Wo to Glenfinlas' dreary glen!
There never son of Albin's hills
Shall draw the hunter's shaft agen!

E'en the tired pilgrim's burning feet
At noon shall shun that shelt'ring den,
Lest, journeying in their rage, he meet
The wayward Ladies of the Glen.

And we — behind the chieftain's shield,
No more shall we in safety dwell ;
None leads the people to the field —
And we the loud lament must swell.

O hone a rie' ! O hone a rie' !
The pride of Albin's line is o'er,
And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree ;
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more !

THE EVE OF SAINT JOHN.

THE Baron of Smaylho'me rose with day,
He spurred his courser on,
Without stop or stay, down the rocky way
That leads to Brotherstone.

He went not with the bold Buccleuch,
His banner broad to rear ;
He went not 'gainst the English yew,
To lift the Scottish spear.

Yet his plate-jack was braced, and his helmet was laced,
And his vaunt-brace of proof he wore ;
At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel sperthe,
Full ten pound weight and more.

The Baron returned in three days' space,
And his looks were sad and sour ;
And weary was his courser's pace,
As he reached his rocky tower.

He came not from where Ancram Moor
Ran red with English blood ;
Where the Douglas true, and the bold Buccleuch
'Gainst keen Lord Evers stood.

Yet was his helmet hacked and hewed,
His acton pierced and tore ;
His axe and his dagger with blood embrued,
But it was not English gore.

He lighted at the Chapellage,
He held him close and still ;
And he whistled thrice for his little foot-page,
His name was English Will.

“Come thou hither, my little foot-page ;
Come hither to my knee ;
Thou art young, and tender of age,
I think thou art true to me.

“Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
And look thou tell me true !
Since I from Smaylho'ne tower have been,
What did thy lady do ?”

“My lady, each night, sought the lonely light,
That burns on the wild Watchfold ;
For, from height to height, the beacons bright
Of the English foemen told.

“The bittern clamored from the moss,
The wind blew loud and shrill ;
Yet the craggy pathway she did cross,
To the eiry beacon hill.

“I watched her steps, and silent came
Where she sat her on a stone ;
No watchmen stood by the dreary flame ;
It burned all alone.

“The second night I kept her in sight,
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary's might ! an armed Knight
Stood by the lonely flame.

“And many a word that warlike lord
Did speak to my lady there ;
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,
And I heard not what they were.

“The third night there the sky was fair,
And the mountain blast was still,
As again I watched the secret pair
On the lonesome beacon-hill.

“And I heard her name in the midnight hour,
And name this holy eve ;
And say, ‘Come this night to thy lady’s bower,
Ask no bold Baron’s leave.

“‘He lifts his spear with the bold Buccleuch ;
His lady is all alone ;
The door she’ll undo to her knight so true,
On the eve of good St. John.’

“‘I cannot come ; I must not come ;
I dare not come to thee ;
On the Eve of St. John I must wander alone :
In thy bower I may not be.’”

“‘Now out on thee, faint-hearted knight !
Thou should’st not say me nay ;
For the eve is sweet, and when lovers meet,
Is worth the whole summer’s day.

“‘And I’ll chain the bloodhound, and the warder
shall not sound,
And rushes shall be strewed on the stair ;
So, by the black rood-stone, and by holy St. John,
I conjure thee, my love, be there !

“Though the bloodhounds be mute, and the rush
beneath my foot,
And the warder his bugle should not blow,
Yet there sleepeth a priest in the chamber to the east,
And my footstep he would know.’

“O fear not the priest, who sleepeth to the east!
For to Dryburgh the way he has ta'en;
And there to say mass, till three days do pass,
For the soul of a knight that is slayne.’

“He turned him around, and grimly he frowned;
Then he laughed right scornfully —
‘He who says the mass-rite for the soul of that knight,
May as well say mass for me.

“‘At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits have
power,
In thy chamber will I be.’ —
With that he was gone, and my lady left alone,
And no more did I see.” —

Then changed, I trow, was that bold Baron's brow,
From the dark to the blood-red high;
“Now, tell me the mien of the knight thou hast seen,
For, by Mary, he shall die!”

“His arms shone full bright, in the beacon's red light;
His plume it was scarlet and blue;
On his shield was a hound, in a silver leash bound,
And his crest was a branch of the yew.”

“Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page,
Loud dost thou lie to me!
For that knight is cold, and low laid in the mould,
All under the Eildon-tree.”

“Yet hear but my word, my noble lord!
For I heard her name his name;
And that lady bright, she called the knight,
Sir Richard of Coldinghame.”

The bold Baron's brow then changed, I trow,
From high blood-red to pale —
“The grave is deep and dark — and the corpse is
stiff and stark —
So I may not trust thy tale.

“Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose,
And Eildon slopes to the plain,
Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,
That gay gallant was slain.

“The varying light deceived thy sight,
And the wild winds drowned the name;
For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks do
sing,
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame!”

He passed the court-gate, and he oped the tower-grate,
And he mounted the narrow stair
To the bartizan-seat, where, with maids that on her wait,
He found his lady fair.

That lady sat in mournful mood ;
Looked over hill and dale ;
Over Tweed's fair flood, and Mertoun's wood,
And all down Teviotdale.

"Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright !"
"Now hail, thou Baron true !
What news, what news, from Ancram fight ?
What news from the bold Buccleuch ?"

"The Ancram Moor is red with gore,
For many a southern fell ;
And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore
To watch our beacons well."

The lady blushed red, but nothing she said ;
Nor added the Baron a word :
Then she stepped down the stair to her chamber fair,
And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourned, and the Baron tossed
and turned,
And oft to himself he said —
"The worms around him creep, and his bloody
grave is deep....
It cannot give up the dead !"

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
The night was well nigh done,
When a heavy sleep on that Baron fell,
On the eve of good St. John.

The lady looked through the chamber fair,
By the light of a dying flame;
And she was aware of a knight stood there —
Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

“Alas! away, away!” she cried,
“For the holy Virgin’s sake!”
“Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side;
But, lady, he will not awake.

“By Eildon-tree, for long nights three,
In bloody grave have I lain;
The mass and the death-prayer are said for me,
But, lady, they are said in vain.

“By the Baron’s brand, near Tweed’s fair strand,
Most foully slain I fell;
And my restless sprite on the beacon’s height,
For a space is doomed to dwell.

“At our trysting-place, for a certain space,
I must wander to and fro;
But I had not had power to come to thy bower,
Had’st thou not conjured me so.”

Love mastered fear — her brow she crossed;
“How, Richard, hast thou sped?
And art thou saved, or art thou lost?”
The Vision shook his head!

“Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life,
So bid thy lord believe:
That lawless love is guilt above,
This awful sign receive.”

He laid his left hand on an oaken beam;
His right upon her hand:
The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,
For it scorched like a fiery brand.

The sable score, of fingers four,
Remains on that hand impressed;
And for evermore that lady wore
A cov'ring on her wrist.

There is a Nun in Dryburgh bower,
Ne'er looks upon the sun:
There is a Monk in Melrose tower,
He speaketh word to none.

That Nun, who ne'er beholds the day,
That Monk, who speaks to none —
That Nun was Smaylho'me's Lady gay,
That Monk the bold Baron.



CADYOW CASTLE.

WHEN princely Hamilton's abode
Ennobled Cadyow's Gothic towers,
The song went round, the goblet flowed,
And revel sped the laughing hours.

Then, thrilling to the harp's gay sound,
So sweetly rung each vaulted wall,
And echoed light the dancer's bound,
As mirth and music cheered the hall.

But Cadyow's towers, in ruins laid,
And vaults, by ivy mantled o'er,
Thrill to the music of the shade,
Or echo Evan's hoarser roar.

Yet still, of Cadyow's faded fame,
You bid me tell a minstrel tale,
And tune my harp, of Border frame,
On the wild banks of Evandale.

For thou, from scenes of courtly pride,
From pleasure's lighter scenes canst turn,
To draw oblivion's pall aside,
And mark the long-forgotten urn.

Then, noble maid! at thy command,
Again the crumbled walls shall rise;
Lo! as on Evan's banks we stand,
The past returns — the present flies. —

Where with the rock's wood-covered side
Were blended late the ruin's green,
Rise turrets in fantastic pride,
And feudal banners flaunt between :

Where the rude torrent's brawling course
Was shagged with thorn and tangling sloe,
The ashler buttress braves its force,
And ramparts frown in battled row.

'Tis night — the shade of keep and spire
Obscurely dance on Evan's stream,
And on the wave the warder's fire
Is checkering the moonlight beam.

Fades slow their light; the east is gray ;
The wary warder leaves his tower ;
Steeds snort; uncoupled stag-hounds bay,
And merry hunters quit the bower.

The draw-bridge falls — they hurry out —
Clatters each plank and swinging chain,
As, dashing o'er, the jovial route
Urge the shy steed, and slack the rein.

First of his troop, the Chief rode on :
His shouting merry-men throng behind ;
The steed of princely Hamilton
Was fleeter than the mountain wind.

From the thick copse the roe-bucks bound,
The startling red-deer scuds the plain ;
For, the hoarse bugle's warrior sound
Has roused their mountain haunts again.

Through the huge oaks of Evandale,
Whose limbs a thousand years have worn,
What sullen roar comes down the gale,
And drowns the hunter's pealing horn?

Mightiest of all the beasts of chase
That roam in woody Caledon,
Crashing the forest in his race,
The Mountain Bull comes thund'ring on.

Fierce, on the hunters' quivered hand,
He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow,
Spurns, with black hoof and horn, the sand,
And tosses high his mane of snow.

Aimed well, the chieftain's lance has flown;
Struggling in blood the savage lies;
His roar is sunk in hollow groan —
Sound, merry huntsman! sound the *pryse!*

'Tis noon — against the knotted oak
The hunters rest the idle spear;
Curls through the trees the slender smoke,
Where yeomen dight the woodland cheer.

Proudly the chieftain marked his clan,
On greenwood lap all careless thrown,
Yet missed his eye the boldest man,
That bore the name of Hamilton.

“Why fills not Bothwellhaugh his place,
Still wont our weal and wo to share?
Why comes he not our sport to grace?
Why shares he not our hunter's fare?”

Stern Claud replied, with dark'ning face,
 (Gray Pasley's haughty lord was he,)
"At merry feast, or buxom chase,
 No more the warrior shalt thou see.

"Few suns have set, since Woodhouselee
 Saw Bothwellhaugh's bright goblets foam,
When to his hearths, in social glee,
 The war-worn soldier turned him home.

"There, wan from her maternal throes,
 His Marg'ret, beautiful and mild,
Sate in her bower, a pallid rose,
 And peaceful nursed her new-born child.

"O change accursed! past are those days:
 False Murray's ruthless spoilers came,
And, for the hearth's domestic blaze,
 Ascends destruction's volumed flame.

"What sheeted phantom wanders wild,
 Where mountain Eske through woodland flows,
Her arms enfold a shadowy child —
 Oh, is it she, the pallid rose?

"The wildered trav'ler sees her glide,
 And hears her feeble voice with awe —
'Revenge,' she cries, 'on Murray's pride!
 And wo for injured Bothwellhaugh!'"

He ceased — and cries of rage and grief
 Burst mingling from the kindred band,
And half arose the kindling Chief,
 And half unsheathed his Arran brand.

But who, o'er bush, o'er stream, and rock,
 Rides headlong, with resistless speed,
 Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke
 Drives to the leap his jaded steed ;

Whose cheek is pale, whose eye-balls glare,
 As one, some visioned sight that saw,
 Whose hands are bloody, loose his hair? —
 — 'Tis he! 'tis he! 'tis Bothwellhaugh!

From gory selle, and reeling steed,
 Sprung the fierce horseman with a bound,
 And, reeking from the recent deed,
 He dashed his carbine on the ground.

Sternly he spoke — " 'Tis sweet to hear,
 In good greenwood, the bugle blown ;
 But sweeter to Revenge's ear,
 To drink a tyrant's dying groan.

" Your slaughtered quarry proudly trode,
 At dawning morn, o'er dale and down,
 But prouder base-born Murray rode
 Through old Linlithgow's crowded town.

" From the wild Border's humbled side,
 In haughty triumph, marched he,
 While Knox relaxed his bigot pride,
 And smiled, the trait'rous pomp to sec.

" But, can stern Power, with all his vaunt,
 Or Pomp, with all her courtly glare,
 The settled heart of Vengeance daunt,
 Or change the purpose of Despair ?

“With hackbut bent, my secret stand
Dark as the purposed deed, I chose,
And marked, where, mingling in his band,
Trooped Scottish pikes and English bows.

“Dark Morton, girt with many a spear,
Murder’s foul minion, led the van;
And clashed their broadswords in the rear,
The wild Macfarlanes’ plaided clan.

“Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh,
Obsequious at their Regent’s rein,
And haggard Lindesay’s iron eye,
That saw fair Mary weep in vain.

“Mid pennoned spears, a steely grove,
Proud Murray’s plumage floated high;
Scarce could his trampling charger move,
So close the minions crowded nigh.

“From the raised visor’s shade, his eye,
Dark-rolling, glanced the ranks along,
And his steel truncheon, waved on high,
Seemed marshalling the iron throng.

“But yet his saddened brow confessed
A passing shade of doubt and awe;
Some fiend was whisp’ring in his breast,
‘Beware of injured Bothwellhaugh!’

“The death-shot parts—the charger springs—
Wild rises tumult’s startling roar!—
And Murray’s plummy helmet rings—
—Rings on the ground, to rise no more.

“What joy the raptured youth can feel,
To hear her love the loved one tell,
Or he, who broaches on his steel
The wolf, by whom his infant fell!

“But dearer to my injured eye,
To see in dust proud Murray roll;
And mine was ten times trebled joy,
To hear him groan his felon soul.

“My Marg’ret’s spectre glided near;
With pride her bleeding victim saw;
And shrieked in his death-deafened ear,
‘Remember injured Bothwellhaugh!’

“Then speed thee, noble Chatlerault!
Spread to the wind thy bannered tree!
Each warrior bend his Clydesdale bow! —
Murray is fallen, and Scotland free.”

Vaults ev’ry warrior to his steed;
Loud bugles join their wild acclaim —
“Murray is fallen, and Scotland freed!
Couch, Arran! couch thy spear of flame!”

But, see! the Minstrel vision fails —
The glimm’ring spears are seen no more;
The shouts of war die on the gales,
Or sink in Evan’s lonely roar.

For the loud bugle, pealing high,
The blackbird whistles down the vale,
And sunk in ivied ruins lie
The bannered towers of Evandale.

For chiefs, intent on bloody deed,
And Vengeance, shouting o'er the slain,
Lo! high-born Beauty rules the steed,
Or graceful guides the silken rein.

And long may Peace and Pleasure own
The maids, who list the Minstrel's tale
Nor e'er a ruder guest be known
On the fair banks of Evandale.



THE GRAY BROTHER.

A FRAGMENT.

THE Pope he was saying the high, high mass,
All on Saint Peter's day,
With the power to him given, by the saints in
heaven,
To wash men's sins away.

The Pope he was saying the blessed mass,
And the people kneeled around ;
And from each man's soul his sins did pass,
As he kissed the holy ground.

And all, among the crowded throng,
Was still, both limb and tongue,
While through vaulted roof, and aisles aloof,
The holy accents rung.

At the holiest word he quivered for fear,
And faltered in the sound —
And, when he would the chalice rear,
He dropped it on the ground.

“The breath of one, of evil deed,
Pollutes our sacred day ;
He has no portion in our creed,
No part in what I say.

“ A being, whom no blessed word
To ghostly peace can bring ;
A wretch, at whose approach abhorred,
Recoils each holy thing.

“ Up, up, unhappy ! haste, arise !
My adjuration fear !
I charge thee not to stop my voice,
Nor longer tarry here !”

Amid them all a Pilgrim kneeled,
In gown of sackcloth gray :
Far journeying from his native field,
He first saw Rome that day.

For forty days and nights so drear,
I ween, he had not spoke,
And, save with bread and water clear,
His fast he ne'er had broke.

Amid the penitential flock,
Seemed none more bent to pray,
But, when the Holy Father spoke,
He rose, and went his way.

Again unto his native land,
His weary course he drew,
To Lothian's fair and fertile strand,
And Pentland's mountains blue.

His unblest feet his native seat
Mid Eske's fair woods, regain ;
Through woods more fair no stream more sweet
Rolls to the eastern main.

And Lords to meet that Pilgrim came,
And vassals bent the knee ;
For all mid Scotland's chiefs of fame,
Was none more famed than he.

And boldly for his country stilt,
In battle he had stood,
Aye, e'en when, on the banks of Till,
Her noblest poured their blood.

Sweet are thy paths, O, passing sweet !
By Eske's fair streams that run,
O'er airy steep, through copsewood deep,
Impervious to the sun.

There the rapt poet's step may rove,
And yield the muse the day ;
There Beauty, led by timid Love,
May shun the tell-tale ray ;

From that fair dome, where suit is paid
By blast of bugle free,
To Auchendinny's hazel glade,
And haunted Woodhouselee.

Who knows not Melville's beechy grove,
And Roslin's rocky glen,
Dalkeith, which all the virtues love,
And classic Hawthornden ?

Yet never a path, from day to day,
The Pilgrim's footsteps range,
Save but the solitary way
To Burndale's ruined Grange.

A woful place was that, I ween,
As sorrow could desire ;
For, nodding to the fall, was each crumbling wall,
And the roof was scathed with fire.

It fell upon a summer's eve,
While, on Carnethy's head,
The last faint gleams of the sun's low beams,
Had streaked the gray with red ;

And the convent bell did vespers tell,
Newbottle's oaks among,
And mingled with the solemn knell
Our Lady's evening song :

The heavy knell, the choir's faint swell,
Came slowly down the wind,
And on the Pilgrim's ear they fell,
As his wonted path he did find.

Deep sunk in thought, I ween, he was,
Nor ever raised his eye,
Until he came to that dreary place,
Which did all in ruins lie.

He gazed on the walls, so scathed with fire,
With many a bitter groan —
And there was aware of a Gray Friar,
Resting him on a stone.

“ Now, Christ thee save ! ” said the Gray Brother,
“ Some pilgrim thou seem'st to be ; ”
But in sore amaze did Lord Albert gaze,
Nor answer again made he.

“O come ye from east, or come ye from west,
Or bring relics from over the sea,
Or come ye from the shrine of Saint James the Divine,
Or Saint John of Beverley?”

“I come not from the shrine of Saint James the Divine,
Nor bring relics from over the sea;
I bring but a curse from our father, the Pope,
Which for ever will cling to me.”

“Now, woful pilgrim, say not so!
But kneel thee down by me,
And shrive thee so clean of thy deadly sin,
That absolved thou may'st be.”

“And who art thou, thou Gray Brother,
That I should shrive to thee,
When he, to whom are given the keys of earth and
heaven,
Has no power to pardon me?”

“O I am sent from a distant clime,
Five thousand miles away,
And all to absolve a foul, foul crime,
Done *here* 'twixt night and day.”

The Pilgrim kneeled him on the sand,
And thus began his saye —
When on his neck an ice-cold hand
Did that Gray Brother laye.

* * * * *

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART FIRST.

ANCIENT.

TRUE Thomas lay on Huntlie bank:
A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e;
And there he saw a ladye bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her skirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne;
At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
Hang fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas he pulled aff his cap,
And louted low down to his knee, —
“All hail, thou mighty queen of heaven!
For thy peer on earth I never did see.”

“O no, O no, Thomas,” she said;
“That name does not belang to me;
I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said;
"Harp and carp along with me;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be."

"Betide me weal, betide me wo,
That weird shall never danton me."
Syne he has kissed her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now ye maun go wi' me," she said;
"True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Through weal or wo as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed;
She's ta'en true Thomas up behind;
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on;
The steed gaed swifter than the wind;
Until they reached a desart wide,
And living land was left behind.

"Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee;
Abide, and rest a little space,
And I will show you ferlies three.

"O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?—
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few inquire.

“And see not ye that braid, braid road,
That lies across that lily leven? —
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

“And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae? —
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

“But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see;
For, if you speak word in Elflyn land,
Ye’ll ne’er get back to your ain countrie.”

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk, mirk night, and there was nae starn light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee;
For a’ the blude that’s shed on earth,
Rins through the springs o’ that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu’d an apple frae a tree —
“Take this for thy wages, true Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie.”

“My tongue is mine ain,” true Thomas said;
“A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst, where I may be.

“I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye.”
“Now hold thy peace!” the ladye said,
“For, as I say, so must it be.”

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And, till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

PART SECOND.

ALTERED FROM ANCIENT PROPHECIES

WHEN seven years were come and gane,
The sun blinked fair on pool and stream;
And Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
Like one awakened from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
He saw the flash of armor flee,
And he beheld a gallant knight,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

He was a stalwart knight, and strong;
Of giant make he 'peared to be:
He stirred his horse as he were wode,
Wi' gilded spurs, of fashon free.

Says — “ Well met, well met, true Thomas !
Some uncouth ferlies shew to me.”

Says — “ Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave
Thrice welcome, good Dunbar, to me !

“ Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave,
And I will shew thee curses three,
Shall gair fair Scotland greet and grane,
And change the green to the black livery.

“ A storm shall roar, this very hour,
From Rosse’s Hills to Solway sea,”
“ Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar !
For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lea.”

He put his hand on the earlie’s head ;
He shewed him a rock, beside the sea,
Where a king lay stiff, beneath his steed,
And steel-dight nobles wiped their e’e.

“ The neist curse lights on Branxton Hills :
By Flodden’s high and heathery side,
Shall wave a banner, red as blude,
And chieftains throug wi’ meikle pride.

“ A Scottish king shall come full keen ;
The ruddy lion beareth he :
A feathered arrow sharp, I ween,
Shall make him wink and warre to see.

“ When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
Thus to his men he still shall say —
‘ For God’s sake, turn ye back again,
And give yon southern folk a fray !

Why should I lose, the right is mine?
My doom is not to die this day.'

"Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
And wo and wonder ye sall see;
How forty thousand spearmen stand,
Where yon rank river meets the sea.

"There shall the lion lose the gylte,
And the libbards bear it clean away;
At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
Much gentil blude that day."

"Enough, enough, of curse and ban;
Some blessing shew thou now to me,
Or, by the faith o' my bodie," Corspatrick said,
"Ye shall rue the day ye e'er saw me!"

"The first of blessings I shall thee shew,
Is by a burn, that's called of bread;
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

"Beside that brigg, out-ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen,
Shall many a falling courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

"Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree:
The raven shall come, the erne shall go,
And drink the Saxon blood sae free.
The cross of stone they shall not know,
So thick the corses there shall be."

“But tell me now,” said brave Dunbar,
“True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle Britain,
Ev’n from the north to the southern sea?”

“A French queen shall bear the son,
Shall rule all Britain to the sea:
He of the Bruce’s blude shall come,
As near as in the ninth degree.

“The waters worship shall his race;
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea;
For they shall ride ower ocean wide,
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree.”



PART THIRD.

MODERN.

WHEN seven years more had come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread,
And Ruberslaw showed high Dunyon
His beacon blazing red.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow,
Pitched palliouns took their room,
And crested helms, and spears a rowe,
Glanced gayly through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
Resounds the ensenzie ;
They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
In Learmont's high and ancient hall ;
And there were knights of great renown,
And ladies, laced in pall.

Nor lacked they, while they sat at dine,
The music, nor the tale,
Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
Nor mantling quaighs of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
When as the feast was done ;
(In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
The elfin harp he won.)

Hushed were the throng, both limb and tongue,
And harpers for envy pale ;
And armed lords leaned on their swords,
And hearkened to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
The prophet poured along ;
No after bard might e'er avail
Those numbers to prolong.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years,
As, buoyant on the stormy main,
A parted wreck appears.

He sung King Arthur's table round:
The warrior of the lake;
How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
And bled for ladies' sake.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
The notes melodious swell;
Was none excelled in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venomed wound he bore;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand;
No med'cine could be found,
Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had probed the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue,
She bore the leech's part;
And, while she o'er his sick bed hung,
He paid her with his heart.

O fatal was the gift, I ween!
For, doomed in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard
In fairy tissue wove;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
In gay confusion strove.

The Garde Joyesse, amid the tale,
High reared its glittering head;
And Avalon's enchanted vale
In all its wonders spread.

Brengwain was there, and Segramore,
And field-born Merlin's gramayre;
Of that famed wizard's mighty lore,
O who could sing but he?

Through many a maze the winning song
In changeful passion led,
Till bent at length the list'ning throng
O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand;
With agony, his heart is wrung:
O where is Isolde's lily hand,
And where her soothing tongue?

She comes, she comes! like flash of flame
Can lovers' footsteps fly:
She comes, she comes! she only came
To see her Tristrem die.

She saw him die: her latest sigh
Joined in a kiss his parting breath:
The gentlest pair that Britain bare,
United are in death.

There paused the harp; its ling'ring sound
Died slowly on the ear;
The silent guests still bent around,
For still they seemed to hear.

Then wo broke forth in murmurs weak,
Nor ladies heaved alone the sigh;
But, half ashamed, the rugged cheek
Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Leader's stream, and Learmont's tower,
The mists of evening close;
In camp, in castle, or in bower,
Each warrior sought repose.

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
Dreamed o'er the woful tale;
When footsteps light, across the bent,
The warrior's ears assail.

He starts, he wakes:—“What, Richard, ho!
Arise, my page, arise!
What vent'rous wight, at dead of night,
Dare step where Douglas lies!”

Then forth they rushed: by Leader's tide,
A selcouth sight they see—
A hart and hind pace side by side,
As white as snow on Fairnalie.

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
They stately move and slow;
Nor scare they at the gath'ring crowd,
Who marvel as they go.

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
As fast as page might run;
And Thomas started from his bed,
And soon his clothes did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red ;
Never a word he spake but three ;—
“ My sand is run ; my thread is spun ;
This sign regardeth me.”

The Elfin harp his neck around,
In minstrel guise, he hung ;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went ; yet turned him oft
To view his ancient hall ;
On the gray tower, in lustre soft,
The autumn moonbeams fall.

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danced shimm'ring in the ray :
In deep'ning mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

“ Farewell, my father's ancient tower !
A long farewell,” said he :
“ The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power,
Thou never more shalt be.

“ To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,
And on thy hospitable hearth
The hare shall leave her young.

“ Adieu ! Adieu !” again he cried,
And as he turned him roun'—
“ Farewell to Leader's silver tide !
Farewell to Ercildoune !”

The hart and hind approached the place,
As ling'ring yet he stood;
And there, before Lord Douglas' face,
With them he crossed the flood.

Lord Douglas leaped on his berry-brown steed,
And spurred him the Leader o'er;
But, though he rode with lightning speed,
He never saw them more.

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
Their wondrous course had been;
But ne'er in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen.



THE FIRE-KING.

BOLD knights and fair dames, to my harp give an ear,
Of love, and of war, and of wonder to hear ;
And you haply may sigh, in the midst of your glee,
At the tale of Count Albert and fair Rosalie.

O see you that castle, so strong and so high ?
And see you that lady, the tear in her eye ?
And see you that palmer, from Palestine's land,
The shell on his hat, and the staff in his hand ? —

“Now palmer, gray palmer, O tell unto me,
What news bring you home from the Holy Countrie ?
And how goes the warfare by Galilee's strand ?
And how fare our nobles, the flower of the land ?”

“O well goes the warfare by Galilee's wave,
For Gilead, and Nablous, and Ramah we have ;
And well fare our nobles by Mount Lebanon,
For the Heathen have lost, and the Christians have won.”

A fair chain of gold 'mid her ringlets there hung ;
O'er the palmer's gray locks the fair chain has she flung
“O palmer, gray palmer, this chain be thy fee,
For the news thou hast brought from the Holy Countrie.

“O palmer, good palmer, by Galilee's wave,
O sav ye Count Albert, the gentle and brave? [on,
When the Crescent went back, and the Red-cross rushed
O saw ye him foremost on Mount Lebanon ?” —

“ O lady, fair lady, the tree green it grows ;
O lady, fair lady, the stream pure it flows ;
Your castle stands strong, and your hopes soar on high,
But lady, fair lady, all blossoms to die.

“ The green boughs they wither, the thunderbolt falls,
It leaves of your castle but levin-scorched walls ;
The pure stream runs muddy ; the gay hope is gone ;
Count Albert is pris'ner on Mount Lebanon.” —

O she's ta'en a horse, should be fleet at her speed ;
And she's ta'en a sword, should be sharp at her need ;
And she has ta'en shipping for Palestine's land,
To ransom Count Albert from Soldanrie's hand.

Small thought had Count Albert on fair Rosalie,
Small thought on his faith, on his knighthood, had he ;
A heathenish damsel his light heart had won,
The Soldan's fair daughter on Mount Lebanon.

“ O Christian, brave Christian, my love would'st thou be,
Three things must thou do ere I hearken to thee ;
Our laws and our worship on thee shalt thou take ;
And this thou shalt first do for Zulema's sake.

“ And, next, in the cavern, where burns evermore
The mystical flame which the Curdman's adore,
Alone, and in silence, three nights shalt thou wake ;
And this thou shalt next do for Zulema's sake.

“ And, last, thou shalt aid us with council and hand,
To drive the Frank robber from Palestine's land ;
For my lord and my love then Count Albert I'll take,
When all this is accomplished for Zulema's sake.”

He has thrown by his helmet and cross-handled sword,
Renouncing his knighthood, denying his Lord ;
He has ta'en the green caftan, and turban put on,
For the love of the maiden of fair Lebanon.

And in the dread cavern, deep deep under ground,
Which fifty steel gates and steel portals surround,
He has watched until daybreak, but sight saw he none,
Save the flame burning bright on its altar of stone.

Amazed was the princess, the soldan amazed,
Sore murmured the priests as on Albert they gazed ;
They searched all his garments, and, under his weeds,
They found, and took from him, his rosary beads.

Again in the cavern, deep deep under ground, [round ;
He watched the lone night, while the winds whistled
Far off was their murmur, it came not more nigh,
The flame burned unmoved, and naught else did he spy.

Loud murmured the priests, and amazed was the king,
While many dark spells of their witchcraft they sing :
They searched Albert's body, and, lo ! on his breast
Was the sign of the Cross, by his father impressed.

The priests they erase it with care and with pain,
And the recreant returned to the cavern again ;
But, as he descended, a whisper there fell ! —
It was his good angel, who bade him farewell !

High bristled his hair, his heart fluttered and beat,
And he turned him five steps, half resolved to retreat ;
But his heart it was hardened, his purpose was gone,
When he thought on the maiden of fair Lebanon.

Scarce passed he the archway, the threshold scarce trod,
When the winds from the four points of heaven were
abroad ;
They made each steel portal to rattle and ring,
And, borne on the blast, came the dread Fire-King.

Full sore rocked the cavern, whene'er he drew nigh,
The fire on the altar blazed bick'ring and high ;
In volcanic explosions the mountains proclaim
The dreadful approach of the Monarch of Flame.

Unmeasured in height, and undistinguished in form,
His breath it was lightning, his voice it was storm ;
I ween the stout heart of Count Albert was tame,
When he saw in his terrors the Monarch of Flame.

In his hand a broad falchion blue-glimmered through
smoke,
And Mount Lebanon shook, as the Monarch he spoke :
" With this brand shalt thou conquer, thus long, and
no more,
Till thou bend to the Cross, and the Virgin adore."

The cloud-shrouded arm gives the weapon ; and, see,
The recreant receives the charmed gift on his knee :
The thunders growl distant, and faint gleam the fires,
As, borne on his whirlwind, the Phantom retires.

Count Albert has armed him the Paynim among,
Though his heart it was false, yet his arm it was
strong ;
And the Red-cross waxed faint, and the Crescent
came on,
From the day he commanded on Mount Lebanon.

From Lebanon's forests to Galilee's wave,
The sands of Samaar drank the blood of the brave ;
Till the Knights of the Temple, and Knights of Saint
 John,
With Salem's King Baldwin against him came on.

The war-cymbals clattered, the trumpets replied,
The iances were couched, and they closed on each
 side ;
And horsemen and horses Count Albert o'erthrew,
Till he pierced the thick tumult King Baldwin unto.

Against the charmed blade which Count Albert did
 wield,
The fence had been vain of the King's Red-cross
 shield ;
But a Page thrust him forward the monarch before,
And cleft the proud turban the renegade wore.

So fell was the dint, that Count Albert stooped low
Before the crossed shield to his steel saddle-bow ;
And scarce had he bent to the Red-Cross his head,—
“ *Bonne grace, notre Dame,*” he unwittingly said.

Sore sighed the charmed sword, for its virtue was
 o'er,
It sprung from his grasp, and was never seen more ;
But true men have said, that the lightning's red wing
Did waft back the brand to the dread Fire-King.

He clenched his set teeth, and his gauntleted hand ;
He stretched, with one buffet, that Page on the strand ;
As back from the stripling the broken casque rolled,
You might see the blue eyes, and the ringlets of gold.

Short time had Count Albert in horror to stare
On those death-swimming eye-balls, and blood-clotted
hair ;

For down came the Templars, like Cedron in flood,
And dyed their long lances in Saracen blood.

The Saracens, Curdmans, and Ishmaelites yield
To the scallop, the saltier, and crossletted shield ;
And the eagles were gorged with the infidel dead,
From Bethsaida's fountains to Naphtali's head.

The battle is over on Bethsaida's plain. —
Oh, who is yon Paynim lies stretched 'mid the slain ?
And who is yon Page lying cold at his knee ? —
Oh, who but Count Albert and fair Rosalie.

The Lady was buried in Salem's blessed bound,
The Count he was left to the vulture and hound :
Her soul to high mercy Our Lady did bring ;
His went on the blast to the dread Fire-King.

Yet many a minstrel, in harping, can tell,
How the Red Cross it conquered, the Crescent it fell ;
And lords and gay ladies have sighed, 'mid their glee,
At the tale of Count Albert and fair Rosalie.



FREDERICK AND ALICE.

FRED'RICK leaves the land of France,
Homeward hastes his steps to measure;
Careless casts the parting glance
On the scene of former pleasure ;

Joying in his prancing steed,
Keen to prove his untried blade,
Hope's gay dreams the soldier lead
Over mountain, moor, and glade.

Helpless, ruined, left forlorn,
Lovely Alice wept alone ;
Mourned o'er love's fond contract torn,
Hope, and peace, and honor flown.

Mark her breast's convulsive throbs !
See, the tear of anguish flows ! —
Mingling soon with bursting sobs,
Loud the laugh of frenzy rose.

Wild she cursed, and wild she prayed ;
Seven long days and nights are o'er :
Death in pity brought his aid,
As the village bell struck four.

Far from her, and far from France,
Faithless Fred'rick onward rides :
Marking, blithe, the morning's glance
Mantling o'er the mountain's sides.

Heard ye not the boding sound,
As the tongue of yonder tower
Slowly, to the hills around,
Told the fourth, the fated hour?

Starts the steed, and snuffs the air,
Yet no cause of dread appears;
Bristles high the rider's hair,
Struck with strange mysterious fears.

Desp'rate, as his terrors rise,
In the steed the spur he hides;
From himself in vain he flies;
Anxious, restless, on he rides.

Seven long days, and seven long nights,
Wild he wandered, wo the while!
Ceaseless care, and causeless fright,
Urge his footsteps many a mile.

Dark the seventh sad night descends;
Rivers swell, and rain-streams pour;
While the deaf'ning thunder lends
All the terrors of its roar.

Weary, wet, and spent with toil,
Where his head shall Fred'rick hide?
Where, but in yon ruined aisle,
By the lightning's flash descried?

To the portal, dank and low,
Fast his steed the wand'rer bound;
Down a ruined staircase slow,
Next his darkling way he wound.

Long drear vaults before him lie ;
Glimm'ring lights are seen to glide!—
"Blessed Mary, hear my cry!
Deign a sinner's steps to guide!"—

Often lost their quiv'ring beam,
Still the lights move slow before,
Till they rest their ghastly gleam
Right against an iron door.

Thund'ring voices from within,
Mixed with peals of laughter, rose ;
As they fell, a solemn strain
Lent its wild and wondrous close!

'Midst the din, he seemed to hear
Voice of friends, by death removed ;—
Well he knew that solemn air,
'Twas the lay that Alice loved.—

Hark! for now a solemn knell
Four times on the still night broke ;
Four times, at its deadened swell,
Echoes from the ruins spoke.

As the lengthened clangors die,
Slowly opes the iron door!
Straight a banquet met his eye,
But a funeral's form it wore!

Coffins for the seats extend ;
All with black the board was spread ;
Girt by parent, brother, friend,
Long since numbered with the dead!

Alice, in her grave-clothes bound,
Ghastly smiling, points a seat ;
All arose, with thund'ring sound ;
All th' expected stranger greet.

High their meagre arms they wave,
Wild their notes of welcome swell ;—
Welcome, traitor, to the grave !
Perjured, bid the light farewell !”



THE WILD HUNTSMEN.

THE Wildgrave winds his bugle-horn,
To horse, to horse! halloo, halloo!
His fiery courser snuffs the morn,
And thronging serfs their lord pursue.

The eager pack, from couples freed,
Dash through the bush, the brier, the brake;
While ans'ring hound, and horn, and steed,
The mountain echoes startling wake.

The beams of God's own hallowed day
Had painted yonder spire with gold,
And, calling sinful man to pray,
Loud, long, and deep, the bell had tolled:

But still the Wildgrave onward rides;
Halloo, halloo! and, hark again!
When, spurring from opposing sides,
Two Stranger Horsemen join the train.

Who was each stranger, left and right,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
The right-hand steed was silver white,
The left, the swarthy hue of hell.

The right-hand horseman, young and fair,
His smile was like the morn of May;
The left, from eye of tawny glare,
Shot midnight lightning's lurid ray.

He waved his huntsman's cap on high,
Cried, "Welcome, welcome, noble lord!
What sport on earth, or sea, or sky,
To match the princely chase, afford?"

"Cease thy loud bugle's clanging knell,
Cried the fair youth, with silver voice;
"And for devotion's choral swell,
Exchange the rude unhallowed noise.

"To-day, th' ill-omened chase forbear,
Yon bell yet summons to the fane;
To-day the Warning Spirit hear,
To-morrow thou may'st mourn in vain."

"Away, and sweep the glades along,
The Sable Hunter hoarse replies;
"To mutt'ring monks leave matin-song,
And bells, and books, and mysteries."

The Wildgrave spurred his ardent steed,
And, launching forward with a bound,
"Who, for thy drowsy priestlike rede,
Would leave the jovial horn and hound?"

"Hence, if our manly sport offend!
With pious fools go chant and pray:—
Well hast thou spoke, my dark-browed friend;
Halloo, halloo! and, hark away!"

The Wildgrave spurred his courser light,
O'er moss and moor, o'er holt and hill;
And on the left, and on the right,
Each Stranger Horseman followed still.

Up springs, from yonder tangled thorn,
A stag more white than mountain snow ;
And louder rang the Wildgrave's horn,
"Hark forward, forward ! holla ho !"

A heedless wretch has crossed the way ;
He gasps, the thundering hoofs below ;—
But live who can, or die who may,
Still, "Forward, forward !" on they go.

See, where yon simple fences meet,
A field with autumn's blessings crowned ;
See, prostrate at the Wildgrave's feet,
A husbandman, with toil embrowned :

"O mercy, mercy, noble lord !
Spare the poor's pittance," was his cry,
"Earned by the sweat these brows have poured,
In scorching hour of fierce July."—

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey ;
Th' impetuous Earl no warning heeds,
But furious holds the onward way.

"Away, thou hound ! so basely born,
Or dread the scourge's echoing blow !" —
Then loudly rung his bugle-horn,
"Hark forward, forward ! holla, ho !"

So said, so done :— A single bound
Clears the poor laborer's humble pale ;
Wild follows man, and horse, and hound,
Like dark December's stormy gale.

And man, and horse, and hound, and horn,
Destructive sweep the field along;
While, joying o'er the wasted corn,
Fell Famine marks the madd'ning throng.

Again up-roused, the tim'rous prey
Scours moss, and moor, and holt, and hill;
Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
And trusts for life his simple skill.

Too dangerous solitude appeared;
He seeks the shelter of the crowd,
Amid the flock's domestic herd
His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O'er moss, and moor, and holt, and hill,
His track the steady bloodhounds trace;
O'er moss and moor, unwearied still,
The furious Earl pursues the chase.

Full lowly did the herdsman fall;—
“O spare, thou noble Baron, spare
These herds, a widow's little all;
These flocks, an orphan's fleecy care.”

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey
The Earl nor prayer nor pity heeds,
But furious keeps the onward way.

— “Unmannered dog! To stop my sport
Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
Though human spirits, of thy sort,
Were tenants of these carrion kine!”—

Again he winds his bugle-horn,
 “Hark, forward, forward! holla, ho!”
And through the herd, in ruthless scorn,
 He cheers his furious hounds to go.

In heaps the throttled victims fall;
 Down sinks their mangled herdsman near;
The murd'rous cries the stag appal,—
 Again he starts, new-nerved by fear.

With blood besmeared, and white with foam,
 While big the tears of anguish pour,
He seeks, amid the forest's gloom,
 The humble hermit's hallowed bower.

But man, and horse, and horn, and hound,
 Fast rattling on his traces go;
The sacred chapel rung around
 With, “Hark away! and, holla, ho!”

All mild, amid the route profane,
 The holy hermit poured his prayer;—
“Forbear with blood God's house to stain;
 Revere his altar, and forbear!

“The meanest brute has rights to plead,
 Which, wronged by cruelty or pride,
Draw vengeance on the ruthless head:—
 Be warned at length, and turn aside.”

Still the Fair Horseman anxious pleads;
 The Black, wild whooping, points the prey:—
Alas! the Earl no warning heeds,
 But frantic keeps the forward way.

“Holy or not, or right or wrong,
Thy altar, and its rites, I spurn;
Not sainted martyrs’ sacred song,
Not God himself, shall make me turn!”

He spurs his horse, he winds his horn,
“Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!”—
But off, on whirlwind’s pinions borne,
The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse, and man, and horn, and hound,
And clamor of the chase, was gone;
For hoofs, and howls, and bugle sound,
A deadly silence reigned alone.

Wild gazed the affrighted Earl around;
He strove in vain to wake his horn;
In vain to call; for not a sound
Could from his anxious lips be borne.

He listens for his trusty hounds;
No distant baying reached his ears:
His courser, rooted to the ground,
The quick’ning spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker frown the shades,
Dark, as the darkness of the grave;
And not a sound the still invades,
Save what a distant torrent gave.

High o’er the sinner’s humbled head
At length the solemn silence broke;
And, from a cloud of swarthy red,
The awful voice of thunder spoke.

“Oppressor of creation fair!
Apostate Spirits’ hardened tool!
Scorner of God! Scourge of the poor!
The measure of thy cup is full.

“Be chased for ever through the wood;
For ever roam the affrighted wild;
And let thy fate instruct the proud,
God’s meanest creature is his child.”—

’Twas hushed: One flash, of sombre glare,
With yellow tinged the forests brown;
Up rose the Wildgrave’s bristling hair,
And horror chilled each nerve and bone.

Cold poured the sweat in freezing rill;
A rising wind began to sing;
And louder, louder, louder still,
Brought storm and tempest on its wing.

Earth heard the call;— Her entrails rend:
From yawning rifts, with many a yell,
Mixed with sulphureous flames, ascend
The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly Huntsman next arose,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
His eye like midnight lightning glows,
His steed the swarthy hue of hell.

The Wildgrave flies o’er bush and thorn,
With many a shriek of helpless wo;
Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
And, “Hark away, and holla, ho’!”

With wild despair's reverted eye,
Close, close behind, he marks the throng,
With bloody fangs, and eager cry;
In frantic fear he scours along.—

Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
Till Time itself shall have an end:
By day, they scour earth's caverned space,
At midnight's witching hour, ascend.

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
That oft the 'lated peasant hears;
Appalled, he signs the frequent cross,
When the wild din invades his ears.

The wakeful priest oft drops a tear,
For human pride, for human wo,
When, at his midnight mass, he hears
The infernal cry of "Holla, ho!"



WAR-SONG.

To horse! to horse! the standard flies,
The bugles sound the call;
The Gallic navy stems the seas,
The voice of Battle's on the breeze,
Arouse ye, one and all!

From high Dunedin's towers we come,
A band of brothers true;
Our casques the leopard's spoils surround,
With Scotland's hardy thistle crowned;
We boast the red and blue.

Though tamely crouch to Gallia's frown,
Dull Holland's tardy train;
Their ravished toys though Romans mourn,
Though gallant Switzers vainly spurn,
And, foaming, gnaw the chain;

O! had they marked the avenging call
Their brethren's murder gave,
Disunion ne'er their ranks had mown,
Nor patriot valor, desp'rate grown,
Sought freedom in the grave!

Shall we, too, bend the stubborn head,
In Freedom's temple born,
Dress our pale cheek in timid smile,
To hail a master in our isle,
Or brook a victor's scorn?

No! though destruction o'er the land
Come pouring as a flood,
The sun, that sees our falling day,
Shall mark our sabres' deadly sway,
And set that night in blood.

For gold let Gallia's legions fight,
Or plunder's bloody gain;
Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,
To guard our King, to fence our Law,
Nor shall their edge be vain.

If ever breath of British gale
Shall fan the tri-color,
Or footstep of invader rude,
With rapine foul, and red with blood,
Pollute our happy shore, —

Then farewell home! and farewell friends!
Adieu each tender tie!
Resolved, we mingle in the tide,
Where charging squadrons furious ride,
To conquer, or to die.

To horse! to horse! the sabres gleam;
High sounds our bugle call;
Combined by honor's sacred tie,
Our word is, *Laos and Liberty!*
March forward, one and all!

THE NORMAN HORSE-SHOE.

RED glows the forge in Striguil's bounds,
 And hammers din, and anvil sounds,
 And armorers, with iron toil,
 Barb many a steel for battle's broil
 Foul fall the hand which bends the steel
 Around the courser's thund'ring heel,
 That e'er shall dint a sable wound
 On fair Glamorgan's velvet ground!

From Chepstow's towers, ere dawn of morn,
 Was heard afar the bugle-horn;
 And forth, in banded pomp and pride,
 Stout Clare and fiery Neville ride.
 They swore their banners broad should gleam,
 In crimson light, on Rymny's stream;
 They vowed, Caerphili's sod should feel
 The Norman charger's spurning heel.

And sooth they swore — the sun arose,
 And Rymny's wave with crimson glows;
 For Clare's red banner, floating wide,
 Rolled down the stream to Severn's tide!
 And sooth they vowed — the trampled green
 Showed where hot Neville's charge had been:
 In every sable hoof-tramp stood
 A Norman horseman's curdling blood!

Old Chepstow's brides may curse the toil,
 That armed stout Clare for Cambrian broil;

Their orphans long the art may rue,
For Neville's war-horse forged the shoe.
No more the stamp of armed steed
Shall dint Glamorgan's velvet mead.
Nor trace be there, in early spring,
Save of the Fairies' emerald ring.



THE DYING BARD.

DINAS EMLINN, lament ; for the moment is nigh,
When mute in the woodlands thine echoes shall die :
No more by sweet Teivi Cadwallon shall rave ;
And mix his wild notes with the wild dashing wave.

In spring and in autumn thy glories of shade,
Unhonored shall flourish, unhonored shall fade ;
For soon shall be lifeless the eye and the tongue,
That viewed them with rapture, with rapture that sung.

Thy sons, Dinas Emlinn, may march in their pride,
And chase the proud Saxon from Prestatyn's side ;
But where is the harp shall give life to their name ?
And where is the bard shall give heroes their fame ?

And oh, Dinas Emlinn ! thy daughters so fair,
Who heave the white bosom, and wave the dark hair ;
What tuneful enthusiast shall worship their eye,
When half of their charms with Cadwallon shall die ?

Then adieu, silver Teivi ! I quit thy loved scene,
To join the dim choir of the bards who have been ;
With Lewarch, and Meilor, and Merlin the Old,
And sage Taliessin, high harping to hold.

And adieu, Dinas Emlinn ! still green be thy shades,
Unconquered thy warriors, and matchless thy maids !
And thou, whose faint warblings my weakness can tell,
Farewell, my loved Harp ! my last treasure, farewell !

THE MAID OF TORO.

O, low shone the sun on the fair lake of Toro,
And weak were the whispers that waded the dark wood,
All as a fair maiden, bewildered in sorrow,
Sorely sighed to the breezes, and wept to the flood.
"O, saints! from the mansions of bliss lowly bending;
Sweet Virgin! who hearest the suppliant's cry;
Now grant my petition, in anguish ascending,
My Henry restore, or let Eleanor die!"

All distant and faint were the sounds of the battle,
With the breezes they rise, with the breezes they fail,
Till the shout, and the groan, and the conflict's dread
rattle,
And the chase's wild clamor came loading the gale.
Breathless she gazed on the woodlands so dreary;
Slowly approaching, a warrior was seen;
Life's ebbing tide marked his footsteps so weary,
Cleft was his helmet, and wo was his mien.

"O, save thee, fair maid, for our armies are flying!
O, save thee, fair maid, for thy guardian is low!
Deadly cold on yon heath thy brave Henry is lying;
And fast through the woodland approaches the foe."
Scarce could he falter the tidings of sorrow,
And scarce could she hear them, benumbed with
despair:
And when the sun sunk on the sweet lake of Toro,
For ever he set to the Brave and the Fair.

HELLVELLYN.

I CLIMBED the dark brow of the mighty Hellvellyn,
Lakes and mountains beneath me gleaned misty and
wide ;
All was still, save, by fits, when the eagle was yelling,
And starting around me the echoes replied.
On the right, Striden-edge round the Red-tarn was
bending,
And Catchedicam its left verge was defending,
One huge nameless rock in the front was ascending,
When I marked the sad spot where the wand'rer had
died.

Dark green was that spot 'mid the brown mountain-
heather,
Where the Pilgrim of Nature lay stretched in decay,
Like the corpse of an outcast abandoned to weather,
Till the mountain-winds wasted the tenantless clay.
Nor yet quite deserted, though lonely extended,
For, faithful in death, his mute fav'rite attended,
The much-loved remains of her master defended,
And chased the hill-fox and the raven away.

How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber ;
When the wind waved his garment, how oft didst
thou start ;
How many long days and long weeks didst thou number,
Ere he faded before thee, the friend of thy heart ?

And, oh! was it meet, that, — no requiem read o'er him,
No mother to weep, and no friend to deplore him,
And thou, little guardian, alone stretched before him,—
Unhoned the Pilgrim from life should depart?

When a Prince to the fate of the Peasant has yielded,
The tap'stry waves dark round the dim-lighted hall;
With scutcheons of silver the coffin is shielded,
And pages stand mute by the canopied pall:
Through the courts, at deep midnight, the torches are
gleaming;
In the proudly-arched chapel the banners are beaming;
Far adown the long aisle sacred music is streaming,
Lamenting a Chief of the People should fall.

But meeter for thee, gentle lover of nature,
To lay down thy head like the meek mountain lamb;
When, wildered, he drops from some cliff huge in
stature,
And draws his last sob by the side of his dam.
And more stately thy couch by this desert lake lying,
Thy obsequies sung by the gray plover flying,
With one faithful friend but to witness thy dying,
In the arms of Hellvellyn and Catchedicam.

THE END.

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